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JOHN MALDONATUS

ON THE HOLY GOSPELS

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A COMMENTARY

ON THE

HOLY GOSPELS

BY

JOHN MALDONATUS

TRANSLATED AND EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN BY

GEORGE J. DAVIE, M.A.

EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD

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S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, CHAPTERS I. TO XIV.

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LIFE OF JOHN MALDONATUS.

THE life of a member of a religious order, a student at once, and a teacher, is seldom one of much action or adventure, and that of John Maldonatus was no exception to this rule.

We learn from his contemporary biographers that he was born of good parentage in the village of Zaphara or Safra, in Estramudura, in the south of Spain, about the year 1534; and he early distinguished himself as a scholar and divine. He studied in the University of Salamanca under the most celebrated teachers of the day: especially Fr. Dominic of the Order of S. Dominic, and Francis of Toledo, afterwards Cardinal.

He became a member of the Society of Jesus in 1562 at Rome, where for some time he was known as a teacher of Theology. He removed thence to Paris, in the newly-opened schools of which city he spent ten years as teacher of Philosophy and Theology, with great fame. His popularity was so great that his hearers frequently assembled two or three hours before the appointed time, in such numbers that there was a struggle for places, and he was obliged to give his lectures in the college quadrangle.

He afterwards taught at Poitiers. The Cardinal

of Lorraine, desirous of bringing renown to an institution which he had at heart, induced him to come to the university which he had founded at Pont-a-Mousson. On his return to Paris he continued to teach with undiminished reputation.

But his zeal and learning did not, unfortunately, prevent him at one time from falling under suspicion. He was accused of having unduly influenced President Montbrun to make a bequest of the whole of his property to the Society of Jesus. Of this charge he was acquitted by a decree of the Parliament of Paris. He was also accused of having taught errors on the subject of the Immaculate Conception. The Sorbonne raised this indictment against him because he had said that this was not a certain and incontestable doctrine, an opinion which was then tenable. Pope Gregory XIII. referred the case to Dr. P. Gondi, Bishop of Paris, and subsequently Cardinal. The Bishop presided in person at an inquiry into his life and conduct, which resulted in his entire acquittal. This, however, only increased the desire to persecute him; but he escaped his adversaries by withdrawing to Bourges, where he retired from public teaching and devoted himself to literary labours; the chief of which was the compilation of those Commentaries on the Scriptures of which the present volume forms a part, and for which his name has since been so well known. In about eighteen months, Maldonatus was summoned to Rome, by Pope Gregory XIII., to superintend an edition of the Septuagint. After a short period he died in that city in the 51st year of his age, A.D. 1584.

Maldonatus was one of the most learned theologians of his Society, and one of the finest geniuses of his age. He is described as being gifted by nature with admirable quickness of wit and great subtlety and penetration, excellent judgment, a most tenacious memory, and indefatigable diligence in study, by which he made himself master of the Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and other Eastern languages, as is shown throughout his works. To this may be added a profound knowledge of the Greek and Latin fathers and historians of the Church.

In his moral life, his goodness, or rather holiness, was great. He showed much contempt for worldly distinction and honour. He was humble of heart, and of almost incredible modesty of mind. He was well received by the great, but his humility constantly induced him to decline their overtures, even to the extent of being thought by some to be haughty and morose. He was ardent and continual in devotion, prayer, and divine meditation, exceedingly simple and temperate in his diet, and so true a follower of primitive poverty as to refuse to possess anything of his own; even when he travelled he took nothing with him but the clothes he was wearing, and these mean rather than even simple and unostentatious. In a word, he was a man crucified to the world and to himself.

Maldonatus when near his end delivered his Commentaries to the care of Claude Aquaviva, General of his Society, who gave orders to the Jesuits of Pont-a-Mousson, in Lorraine, to print them from a copy which was sent to them. These acknowledge, in the preface of the work, that they

had inserted some things of their own, and that they had been obliged to correct the MS. copy, which was defective in some places, it not being in their power to consult the original, which was at Rome. The author, moreover, not having noted in the margin of the copy the books and places whence he had taken a good part of his citations, they had supplied this defect.

Naturally, Maldonatus is not always as exact as if he had himself put the last touch to his Commentary; but, notwithstanding this defect, and some others easy to correct, it can be well seen that the author laboured with great diligence at this excellent work. He allows no difficulty to pass which he does not examine to the bottom. When he finds many literal meanings to the same passage, he is accustomed to select the best, without having too much regard to the authority of ancient commentators, nor even to the majority: considering only the truth in itself. He often rejects the interpretation of S. Augustin, not only on points of grammar or criticism, but even in the important facts of Theology; being persuaded, that whatever weight his authority has, it should not serve as a rule to theologians. He is not servilely attached to the opinions of scholastic theologians; he thought for himself, and had opinions sufficiently free, and sometimes singular, but always orthodox. If he is a little too diffuse on some matters of controversy, he could not be otherwise according to the design which he proposed to himself of replying to heretics, principally Calvinists, who had published Commentaries on the New Testament, filled with

disputes of this kind. His controversies are not wearisome, because he does not make long digressions.

His style is clear and didactic. Great facility of expression, great vivacity, the presence of spirit and flexibility rendered him very formidable in disputation. He is, indeed, sometimes cutting and severe; but if we compare him with Calvin and Beza, who continually declaim against the Roman Church, he appears moderate. Those even among the Calvinists who considered him an evil speaker, "maledicentissimus Maldonatus," have not been able to refrain from praises of his strength of mind and great erudition.

Of his works, we have:

I. An excellent Commentary on the Gospels: the best editions of which are those of Pont-a-Mousson, in folio, 1595, and the following ones until 1617; for those which have been made since are much altered.

II. A Treatise on the Sacraments, with other Opuscula, printed at Lyons, 1614, in quarto.

III. A Treatise on Grace, one on Original Sin, one on the Rites of the Church; Scholia on the Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and Isaiah, and many other pieces: published in Paris in 1677, in folio. This volume is enriched with a preface in his praise.

IV. A Treatise upon Angels and Demons, Paris, 1617. This curious and rare work has only been printed in French; being translated from the Latin, which has never seen the light, by Fr. Arnauld, Seigneur of Laborie.

V. Summula Casuum Conscientiæ, the teaching of which appears somewhat lax.

VI. Tractatus de Ceremoniis, which was printed for the first time at Rome in 1781, in quarto, by the care of Francois Antoine Zaccaria, in the Bibliotheca Ritualis.

He alludes sometimes to writings which he had dictated, and which he had intended to publish, frequently citing one entitled, "Liber Hebraicarum lectionum," in which he treats, in several lectures, the Hebrew text where it differs from the Septuagint.

M. du Bois, a learned doctor of the Sorbonne, who cannot be a suspicious witness, eulogises him in a preface which he wrote to the Theological works of this learned man, printed at Paris in 1677.* The present Translation has been made from the Mayence folio of 1596, collated with the octavo, also of Mayence, of 1853. It should be stated that the Editor of the latter has made several omissions from the folio, some of which, at least, appear of importance. These, with very rare exceptions, have been restored in the Translation, a few passages merely having been passed over which would seem to have been penned rather in the spirit of the times of Maldonatus than of our own. None of these bear in any way on questions of doctrine, nor have any of them been ventured upon without the support of the octavo. Their existence forms one reason among others for our regret that the Author did not live to revise and correct his great work.

* R. Simon, "Histoire critique des principaux Commentateurs du Nouveau Testament". F. X. de Feller, *Dict. Historique*, Art. "Maldonat".

PREFACE.



THE Preface shall consist of a brief preliminary disquisition on some points, before proceeding to the explanation of the Gospels themselves. They may be arranged under six heads.

I. The meaning of the words "Evangel" and "Evangelist".
II. What and whence their authority.
III. What their number, and why neither less nor more than four.
IV. Where each was written.
V. In what language.
VI. To what end and purpose.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE VARIOUS MEANINGS OF THE WORDS "GOSPEL" (EVANGEL) AND "EVANGELIST".

THE word "Gospel" means a happy and pleasant message, and εὐαγγελιζεῖν, or, as it is more frequently written, εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, signifies the beginning of such a message. This is so well known that it needs less to be mentioned than not passed over.

It is less known that these two words, although

sometimes found in profane authors, are more properly the possession of the Church. Through the LXX. they seem to have been in a manner bestowed by the State upon the Church. For other Greek authors, even when relating the most fortunate events, use the term of ordinary announcements—*ἀγγέλλειν*, rather than the more proper one —*εὐαγγελίζειν*. But the Hebrews with the utmost scrupulousness retain the correct meaning of the term בשר when relating prosperous circumstances. In all other cases they keep the usual expression השמיע הגיד. The difference between the terms is seen in the following passages of Scripture: 2 *Kings* iv. 10; xviii. 19, 25, 26, 31; 4 *Kings* vii. 9. There are two passages in which the word בשר seems to be used in a calamitous sense (1 *Kings* iv. 17). Eli was told that the ark was taken by the Philistines, the people of Israel slaughtered and dispersed, and his two sons slain. The term used of the messenger is מבשר "Evangelista". The other is (2 *Kings* i. 20) where David laments for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and says, "Publish it not in the streets of Ascalon," *Ne ista Evangelizetis in plateis Ascalon,* אשקלן אל תבשרו בחוצת. But even in these passages the true meaning of the word is preserved. In the former, not because it was a happy message, as some think, because wicked priests were killed. Even if so, it was not such to the father to be told that the people were destroyed and the ark taken, for on hearing it he fell to the ground as one dead and broke his neck;

but because the author of the book used the word not in accordance with truth and fact, but agreeably to the opinion and expectation of the people, who thought that the ark of the Lord in the camp was a sure harbinger of victory. Unless we are to think that the word was used ironically, which, in so great a calamity, we should hardly feel to be right; to laugh at a person overwhelmed with misfortune, being to make light of his suffering. In the latter case, although the death of Saul and Jonathan caused grief to David, it brought joy to the Philistines, "lest," as he immediately adds, "the daughters rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph". In these cases the Hebrew בשׂר and the LXX. εὐαγγελίζεσθαι are used properly. For while the LXX. emulously endeavoured to give the force of the Hebrew word, they made the word εὐαγγελίζεσθαι so well known, that it seems to be not so much a word of the Greeks as of the Church. For the LXX. borrowed it from the Hebrews, the Apostles from the LXX., and the whole Church, both Greek and Latin, received it from the Apostles. The Church uses *evangelizare* like *baptizare*, so that if any abstained from their use he would be thought very little religious, and be justly considered to possess the spirit of Cicero rather than of the Church. The word "Gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) then means a gift given to one who brings good tidings. It was used by Homer (xiv. 152) and by the Hebrews (2 *Kings* xviii. 20-22), בשׂרה. Though the LXX. in the two latter instances use not εὐαγγέλιον, but in

the one εὐαγγέλισμον, and in the other εὐαγγέλιαν. So also a sacrifice which was offered in gratitude for the receipt of good news has been noticed by many, and is known, I suppose, by all. In the same way our great Divine Sacrifice was styled by the earliest Greek Christians Εὐχαρίστια, and the Latins took the term from them. To us Christians, then, the word "Gospel" means nothing else than a good and wished-for message, and not that only but the one than which none better or more desired could either be brought to man or sent by God: the Son of God, made man to procure our salvation, and by His death (that is, His most glorious victory), at the hands of the most cruel of men, to deliver us from certain and never-dying death. And this word has attained to more honour in the Church, in which He in a certain manner sojourned, than in Greece its own country. For, forgetful of all other meanings, it declares especially and above all others, κατ' ἐξόχην, only that which is the most excellent of all things, proclaiming nothing less than Christ, the salvation of man, heaven, and a life of beatitude.

Thus, and rightly, it was received by S. Ambrose, or, rather, Remigius (*Rom.* i. and *Gal.* i.) and Eusebius (i., *De Præp. Evang.*). These define the Gospel as a good message by which sinners are brought to mercy. If we add "through Christ," the message will be not only perfect, but also more explicit. But even this does not exhaust the subject.

The word *Evangelium* may be noticed as taken in the New Testament in four senses.

1. For the joyful message itself which is announced (as in *Matt.* iv. 23; ix. 35; *Mark* i. 14).

2. For the doctrine of Christ (*Matt.* xxiv. 14; xxvi. 12; *Mark* i. 15; viii. 35; x. 29).

3. For the preaching of the Gospel, as very frequently found in S. Paul (*Rom.* i. 1; xvi. 25; 1 *Cor.* iv. 15; ix. 23; *Gal.* ii. 2).

4. The History in which the Gospel, that is, the coming of Christ to us and His life, are related (*Mark* i. 1). I do not know if it be found in this sense elsewhere. For what S. Paul says, when speaking of S. Luke, "whose praise is in the Gospel," although many, and the great S. Jerome among them, on S. Luke (in his *De Viris Illust.*), think that wherever he speaks of his own Gospel, as he often does, that of S. Luke is to be understood; yet the explanation is not certain. It is more probable that S. Paul was commending the great daily labour of S. Luke in preaching, beset as it was with many perils, than that of his writing, which was not so great, and was very brief and free from danger.

In this sense, then, these four books are called the Gospels, so that we may define them to be a History containing the advent of Christ to us and His acts, and approved by the authority of the Catholic Church as dictated by the Holy Ghost. For not every History of Christ, though true, is a Gospel, unless the authority of the Church is given to it, as we shall show in the second Chapter of our Preface.

The Evangelists, however—that is, they who

wrote the Evangelical History—although deriving their appellation from the Evangel, are never, as far as I remember, so called in Scripture, but they who preach the Gospel (*Isa.* lii. 7, although the Greek LXX. have not translated the passage, and *Acts* xxi. 8; *Ephes.* iv. 11; 2 *Tim.* iv. 2). Yet the ecclesiastical custom has obtained that they who never have this title in those books are always known by it in common life, and they who are called Evangelists in the Sacred Books are never ordinarily called so, whilst they who never bear that title in those writings always receive it in common conversation. Nor is the language of our mother to be held in contempt, but followed. For even in cities, they who use the language learnt from their mothers or nurses, so that it be not vulgar, but elegant and correct, are considered the best speakers, as was the case with the most famous orators of ancient Rome. And as in the city to use unpolished expressions is thought barbarous, so in the Church to make use of unecclesiastical terms savours of heresy. Let him, then, be an Evangelist to us who at the dictation of the Holy Ghost wrote the Evangelical History, and who has been approved as such by the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER II.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

To those who have not studied the History of the Church it may appear strange that we should inquire

into the extent of the authority possessed by the Evangelists. But whosoever has done so will remember that many heretics were found in ancient times who sought to detract from the authority even of the four Evangelists themselves, whose words it seems to us profane to question; and he will understand that while in no sense doubting, ourselves, it is a duty for us to doubt for others, lest they doubt for themselves.

The Ebionites received S. Matthew only because, while wholly intent on asserting the true human nature of Christ, this Evangelist appeared to be the one who less than the rest opposed their wickedness (S. Irenæus, i. 26). Others admitted S. Mark only, whom S. Irenæus (i. 26) reprehends without naming them. Others, like the Marcionists and Cerdonians, received only S. Luke. These are mentioned by Tertullian (*De Præs.* and iv., *Against Marcion*); S. Irenæus (iii. 11); Philaster (chap. xlv.); S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, xlii.). The Manichæans and others like them admitted only S. John, as we learn from S. Augustin. The Alogiani, a kind of Arians, accepted all but S. John. They could not hear that heavenly thunder by which their heresy was wholly destroyed, as smitten by a voice from heaven: "In the beginning," &c. We are told this by S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, li.).

Not, indeed, that these different heretics received the Gospels which they accepted, in their truth and integrity, but in a mutilated and, to use the words of S. Irenæus, circumcised form. They carefully re-

jected whatever was opposed to their own heresy, and under pretence of correcting they largely mutilated the text. They could not therefore be refuted by Catholics except from those texts which from forgetfulness, heedlessness, or over-confidence they had left uncorrupted. Tertullian (v., *Contra Marcion*) derides the sponge of Marcion, which he had not drawn with sufficient care over all those passages from which he could have been refuted.

Others, not to appear profane, but religious, comprehended that the Evangelists had been corrupted by heretics, and that they might not prove themselves altogether false, under pretence of amending, they themselves corrupted them; and thus a pretended adulteration became the cause of real corruption. "That heresy," says Tertullian (iv., *Against Marcion*), "is not of divine authority but of human temerity, which thus always mends when it vitiates the Gospels." All classes of heretics employed themselves in these practices, but the Manichæans excelled them all. And thus S. Augustin (*Ep.* xix.) could scarcely find any *locus standi* against them; but by these means they continually cut away the ground from under his feet. This was an old-standing artifice with heretics; for even in the first age of the Apostles themselves, as S. Ignatius says (*Ep.* i. *ad Philadelph.*), there were some so full of universal suspicion that they said they would not believe even the Gospels themselves unless they found them in the archives of the Church.

The Manichæans, by a different but not a lighter wickedness, said that our Gospels were not written by those whose names they bear, but by others long after them, who had neither seen what they relate themselves, nor received them from those who had. So S. Augustin (xxxiii., 3, *Cont. Faust.*). Faustus himself, a chief man among the Manichæans, says that the Manichæans had their own pure and incorrupt Gospel, which the Holy Ghost had given to Manichæus. It was the custom, indeed, of all heretics not to admit the Scriptures, but to make them; not to receive, but to give them. And in these days we should not have the four Gospels but for the good-will and pleasure of Calvin, for he might have rejected these with the same audacity as that by which he rejected so many other books that are approved by the Church. The four Evangelists, then, have the same authority as the Holy Spirit Himself has, whose amanuenses in the composition of them they were. Our own letters derive not their authority from being written by a servant, but from having been dictated by ourselves.

Modern heretics are offended, and regard us with a holy horror, because we say that the Evangelists and other sacred writers derive their authority from the Church, as if we were putting the Church before God. They do not understand, acute as they think themselves, that we say that the Church gives authority to Scripture, because she declares that it was given and dictated by God. Why do they not

blame those who say that royal letters have their authority from the chancellor who affixes the seal to them, as if they set the servant above the lord? The Church, and not Calvin, has the seal of God, that very Spirit which was promised and given, not to Calvin, but to the Church, that He might remain with her for ever. It is He who first dictated the four Gospels, and then taught us that they were dictated by Him, through the Church. And He, the same Spirit, tells us that the spirit of Calvin, by which he approves these Scriptures and disapproves those, is an heretical one. But whilst all the sacred writers have the very greatest authority that they can possibly have, yet the four Evangelists, if there can possibly be a greater than the greatest, have one greater than the greatest. For there is no Christian but, by some religious impulse, whilst he ascribes to the sacred writers the most authority possible, gives to the four Evangelists still more, both because these commemorate the very words and acts of Christ, so that when he reads them, he seems to see and hear Christ Himself, as S. Basil has observed on the opening words of S. John's Gospel, and because the Gospels are the end of the ancient Scriptures, the foundation of the new, and the first fruits, as Origen calls them of all (Origen, tom. i., *In Joann.*), and because the same things have been said by four witnesses. This multitude of witnesses is necessary, not, indeed, to the faith, but to human frailty.

CHAPTER III.

THE NUMBER OF THE EVANGELISTS.

THAT there were many writers of the Gospels we have the evidence of one who deserves the highest confidence—S. Luke (i.). We learn the same fact still more clearly and distinctly from the writings of antiquity. For in S. Clement (*Alex. Strom.*, ii., iii.), Origen (*Tract. in S. Matt.*), S. Irenæus (i. 15), S. Athanasius (*In Synops.*), S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, xxvi., xlvi.), S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome (*Prolog. in S. Matt.*), S. Ambrose (i., *On S. Luke* i.), we read of the Gospel of the Hebrews, Nazarenes, Ebionites; of James, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, even Judas the traitor, and the twelve Apostles. Many heretics also composed or invented Gospels, as Apelles and Basilides in S. Epiphanius. Of so many the Church, by a mystical number as has been thought, only approved four. The heretics, when they had rejected the four true, received the false. As Origen and S. Ambrose have truly said: "The Church, although she has only four books of the Gospel, overflows through the whole world with Evangelists; heresy, while it has many Gospels, has not one. It has been asked why, as so many wrote Gospels, the Church has never received more than four? The answer is obvious. She found that no more than four were written by the Holy Spirit. This is believed to have been the act of the Holy Spirit. Many reasons are given for it, but

those of S. Irenæus (iii. 11), Anastasius (*Quæst.* 5 *in Script.*), S. Jerome (*Prologue in Matt.*), and S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, i. 2) seem to be the best—that there are four quarters of the globe through which the Gospel was to be published. For God in the government of His Church seems to have a regard to this number, so as to act and speak in accordance with the custom of men and the nature of things. Thus Christ says (*S. Matt.* xxiv. 31) that when the Gospel is about to be ended and the harvest gathered in, He would send His angels (four in number, very probably) to the four winds to reap where they have sowed; and there will be an equal number of the morning and evening in a fourfold division of the earth.

So, in the *Apocalypse* (vii. 1), the four angels will hold the four winds, and, in *Ezekiel* i. 16 and *Apocalypse* iv. 6, the chariot on which the Divine Majesty sits will be drawn by the four beasts. The Gospel is the chariot of God, in which the Divine Majesty shines most brightly; for, as S. Paul says, "it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (*Rom.* i. 16). It was therefore to be drawn by the four beasts.

And as the four Evangelists were represented in the Old Testament by the creatures, ancient authors have said that they were so by the four rivers of Paradise, and (S. Jerome, *Prolog. in S. Marc.*) by the four rings by which the ark was carried, the other figures seem to be both rightly adapted to them, and probable. This one seems not only pro-

bable, but even certain, and to have been instituted by the Holy Spirit to this very end—the foreshowing of the future Evangelists.

For it cannot be doubted that the four beasts mean the same thing in *Ezekiel* and the *Apocalypse*. But as it is clear that the twenty-four Ancients who sit around the throne (*Apoc.* iv.) signify the four-and-twenty columns of the Church, the twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles, it is clear that the four beasts which bear the throne show the four Evangelists. It was not without reason, nor, as I believe, divine inspiration, that while the ancient Fathers differ in assigning the figures to the four Evangelists, they all agree on this point (S. Irenæus, iii. 1; S. Jerome, *Prol. to Matth.;* and others). Human minds are seldom found in harmony with the Divine Spirit. But why God sat with those four animals—the man, the ox, the lion, and the eagle—rather than any others, some reasons have been given in the *Commentary on Ezekiel*. It is sufficient here to give a few of those which the ancient Fathers have given. These four animals seem the best adapted to express the peculiar features of the four Evangelists. For S. John, flying upwards with a great rush even to the Divinity of our Lord, resembles the eagle; S. Luke, beginning with the offices of a priest, resembles the ox of sacrifice; S. Mark, beginning with the voice of one crying in the desert, represents the lion roaring in the wilderness; S. Matthew, beginning from the human generation of Christ, makes himself, as

it were, a man with Christ. Thus almost all authors apply these four creatures to the four Evangelists, some a little differently to others; for S. Irenæus, the most ancient of all, makes S. John the lion and S. Mark the eagle, because the former commences boldly at once: "In the beginning," and S. Mark, with the spirit of prophecy, begins: "The voice of one". But this diversity does not detract from the faithfulness of the figure. Sedulius, a Christian poet, thinks that the Evangelists being four in number represents the universality of the times. For he says that the twelve Apostles signify the twelve months of the year, and the four Evangelists the four seasons through which the sun of the Gospel takes his annual course.

CHAPTER IV.

AT WHAT TIME THE EVANGELISTS WROTE.

With regard to the time at which each Evangelist wrote his Gospel, almost all authors seem to agree that they wrote them in the order in which they now stand. It is not doubtful, therefore, that S. Matthew comes first, S. Mark second, S. Luke third, and S. John last. But the precise time and place are uncertain.

Most say that S. Matthew wrote in the third year of Caligula—that is, the eighth after the Ascension, when S. Peter and S. Paul were preaching at Rome—and that he composed it most especially for his own people in Judea. So say S. Irenæus (iii.

1), though he does not mention the time of Caligula; S. Athanasius (*Synop.*); Eusebius (*Hist.*, v. 8, and *Chron.*); S. Chrysostom; S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, i. 2); and Theophylact (*Comment. on S. Matt.*). These mention it as the tradition of the Church. Eusebius and S. Athanasius say that S. Mark was then at Antioch; Theophylact says that S. Mark published his Gospel ten years after, S. Luke fifteen, S. John thirty-two; he says in his prologue that S. John wrote his Gospel in the island of Patmos; Nicephorus and others that he wrote it at Ephesus, after his return from banishment. S. Isidore (*De Sanct. Nov. Test.*), Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact, Nicephorus, say that he wrote it before the destruction of Jerusalem, thirty-two or thirty-three years after the Ascension, and they who assert that he wrote it at Patmos must hold the same opinion. S. Jerome and others say that he wrote it after the destruction of that city —sixty-eight years. Bede says sixty-five after the Ascension.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHAT LANGUAGE THE EVANGELISTS WROTE.

It was the constant opinion of all the Ancients that the others wrote in Greek, which was then the almost universal language, but that S. Matthew wrote in Hebrew. This was the opinion of the authors mentioned above, Papias, a very ancient author quoted by Eusebius (*Hist.*, iii. 39), S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, xxx), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* i. *in*

Matt.), S. Jerome (*De vit. Illust.* and *Prol. in Matt.*), and whoever has treated of the subject. But who translated it into Greek is quite uncertain. Few say anything on the subject, and those do not agree among themselves. For S. Athanasius says it was James the brother of S. John; Theophylact that it was S. John himself. S. Augustin leaves it undecided; and I seem most inclined to follow his opinion. S. Jerome says that he saw the Hebrew version, and there is one still extant; but whether it is in all respects the same as that mentioned by S. Jerome may be a question. I cannot help the suspicion that it has passed through the hands first of Jews and then of heretics—neither of them very trustworthy persons.

To deny that S. Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew, as some not unlearned men of our age have done, is somewhat rash. I, at least, cannot agree with them, for the constant opinion of antiquity, and the authority of all ancient writers, are of more weight with me than the reasoning of these persons, however acute. Their assertion, that S. Matthew could not have written in Hebrew because he so often explains Hebrew words (as "Emmanuel," that is, "God with us"; "*Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani*," that is, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me"), is not of sufficient weight to induce me to give up an opinion confirmed by so many ages of antiquity, and the question why he explains these two Hebrew words rather than all the others, if he wrote all in Hebrew, is of still less.

In what language should he explain them? In Hebrew? This was not needed. In some other? He could not when he was not writing in any other. By this reasoning it might be proved that the Old Testament was not written in Hebrew, nor the New in Greek.

For even in the Old Testament Hebrew words are sometimes explained by Greek, often by Latin, ones; and in the New Testament we have Greek explanations, as (1 *Kings* vii. 12) את־שמה אבן העזר ויקרא "He called its name Ebenchezer," to which the LXX. added the explanation: "He called the place 'The stone of help'".

In *Gen.* xxxi. 48: "The name thereof was called גלעד". The Latin adds: "That is, the witness heap".

In *Gen.* xxxv. 18, she called his name בן־אוני that is, "the son of my pain," as is added by the Latin, and again "but his father called him בנימין". The Latin explains it as "the son of my right hand".

Exodus xvi. 15, 31: "The house of Israel called the name thereof מן הוא". The Latin adds "which signifieth 'What is this?'"

In *Apocalypse* ix. 11: "Whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon". The Latin version adds: "In Latin Exterminans".

If Moses wrote in Hebrew, how does he explain Hebrew words? If S. John wrote in Greek, how does he explain Greek words by Latin? These explanations are not the work of the author, but of

the translator, and it is not improbable that a writer in Hebrew may explain one Hebrew word by another; as we often do in ordinary conversation with a compound word or one not in common use.

For example, the Hebrew עמנואל which not only can be explained but which needs explanation. יהוה עמנו "The Lord with us," or עמנו אל "God with us," and "*Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani,*" which is Syriac, and can be translated into Hebrew.

In the extant Hebrew Gospel, the explanation of these words is not found. I am not speaking of what has been done, but of what I think it possible to do. It appears more probable that derivations and explanations of this kind were the work of the translator. But this does not in any degree detract from the authority of Scripture.

CHAPTER VI.

WHY THE EVANGELISTS WROTE.

WITH what design and from what motives the Evangelists were induced to write the Gospels they partly inform us themselves, and partly we learn from the authoritative statements of the Ancients, and our own conjectures on the subject. S. Luke (i. 1) signifies that he himself was led to write because he saw that many were endeavouring to compose Gospels who did the work with very little truthfulness. This fact, although he does not state it directly, he wishes to be understood. For when he says that "It seemed good to me, having dili-

ligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write" (i. 3), he points indirectly to those of whom he was speaking, and who had not learnt the truth sufficiently as having taken in hand to write. But so holy a man judged it more in accordance with modesty to state his own diligence and faithfulness in the composition of his history than to blame the negligence and untruthfulness of others. This appears to be his meaning, though not openly stated by him. For the word used by him in the beginning of his Gospel, ἐπεχείρησαν, have "taken in hand," signifies that they whom he is tacitly accusing made their attempt indeed, but very little carried it out into practice, as the Ancients (Origen, *Hom.* i. *in Luc.;* S. Ambrose, *In Luc.* i.; S. Augustin, *De Consens.*, iv. 8), have observed.

That the same cause induced the other Evangelists to give us their Gospels we may understand from S. Luke. 2. S. John brings another reason, which, although the others do not, but as they had one heart and one soul, and the same holiness, we must believe to have been common to all. "These," says S. John, "are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name" (xx. 31). 3. A third cause seems to have been that the hearers might have in writing what the Apostles had taught them by word of mouth, that they might not forget them or understand them amiss. S. Luke gives this reason (i. 4), or, as the Greek says more emphatically: "Which

thou hast heard *viva voce*". 4. That what they had taught their hearers when present they might teach them still in their absence by their writings. In this manner S. Paul speaks to the Romans (x. 18), for their own voices would be very shortly silenced on earth. 5. That not only during their lives, but also after their death, they might preach the Gospel, not to those alone who were then living, but also to all who should live hereafter; that as it had been preached to the dead, so it should be preached through the dead. The knowledge was of such importance that it had to be taught in all places, at all times, to all manner of men, and through every class of the human race.

These are general reasons, but each Evangelist must also have his own particular ones. For all ancient authors relate that S. John was compelled to write because of heretics. For as the Ebionites, Cerinthians, and Nicolaitans denied the Divinity of Christ, and he saw that the other Evangelists laid less stress on asserting it, he judged that he himself ought most especially to write in its support. So says S. Jerome (*De vir. illust. in Joann.*), S. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, li.), S. Augustin (in his *Introduction to S. John*). This object, besides the fact that the Ancients tell us of it, appears clearly, not only *ex initio*, but from his whole work, for he everywhere teaches the Divinity of Christ. And that the other Evangelists also had their own peculiar reasons for writing is taught and explained by S. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, li.) and Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.*, iii. 24).

THE GOSPEL OF S. MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

THE TITLES OF THE GOSPELS.

"THE Gospel according to S. Matthew." This title, the names of the authors only being changed, is prefixed to all the Gospels. Some think that this was done by the Evangelists themselves, to increase the authority of their works; and Tertullian upbraids Marcion because he would not prefix the name of Luke to that Gospel—the only one he received.

From this it is plain that all the Gospels always had this title. But that it was added by the Evangelists themselves is a matter quite beyond proof. The addition was made not by them, but by the Church. For if the Evangelists themselves had given the titles, they would not have used the same words to each: "The Gospel according to". The difference between the Greek and Latin versions also shows this. For the Greek has "The Gospel according to," the Latin in most copies "The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to". The Greek Church added the Greek title, the Latin Church the Latin.

But the books themselves have not less authority than if the Evangelists had done this. For we should not have believed their assertion that they were the authors unless the Church had authoritatively informed us of the fact.

The titles were added not only to give additional weight to the books from the names of their authors, but also to distinguish the Gospels from one another. The words *κατὰ Μάτθαιον* mean that others indeed wrote Gospels, but not in the same manner. Nor do the words imply any difference in doctrine or opinion among the Evangelists, as with the Greek philosophers, according to Aristotle or according to Plato, but only diversity of authorships and of styles of writing.

Verse 1. *The Book of the Generation.*

Some think that this is not the title of the whole book, but the beginning of the genealogy of Jesus Christ alone. They explain the words to mean here "The Narration," as the Hebrew סֵפֶר (*Gen.* v. 1). This is the book of the generation of Adam—that is, the relation of the genealogy deduced from Adam—as we read of *Liber Justorum* and *Liber Dei*, in which the names and acts of the just are related (*Exod.* xxxii. 33 ; *Josue* x. 13 ; 2 *Kings* i. 18). Others think it the title of the book, but taken from what is related in the beginning—that is, the genealogy of Christ—as the book of Genesis, or the generation of all things, is so termed, although this particular subject is treated of in the first chapter alone. This is the opinion of the greatest number of authors, and of those of the greatest weight (S. Augustin, ii. 6, *Cont. Faustum*). Others, again, think it to be not merely a part of the book, but the expression of the whole subject ; for the Hebrew word תּוֹלְדֹת (*γένεσις* in Greek) signifies not only the generation, but the whole life, of a man, and all that happens in the course of it—as *Gen.* vi. 9 : "Noe was a just and perfect man in his generations," that is, in all parts of his life ; as if it were said here, "The Book of the Life of Jesus Christ". This opinion seems better than that of the others, because it agrees with the Hebrew, and is more full.

Of Jesus Christ.

Jesus means Saviour and Christ anointed, thus signifying that Messiah for whom the Jews looked so earnestly. The Evangelist appears to have wished to excite the people's minds and gain their goodwill, by saying that he was giving them the history of that Saviour whom they so desired and so looked for. This appears from the words of chapters i. 16; ii. 4; xvi. 16, 20; xxvii. 17, 22; *S. Luke* iii. 15; iv. 41; xxii. 66; xxiii. 2; xxxv. 9.

The Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

There are three questions here: 1. Why the Evangelist names these two especially, out of a long series of the forefathers of Christ? 2. Why David, the younger, is put before Abraham the elder? 3. To whom the genitive case, the Son (*filii*), refers—whether to Christ or to David?

1. On the first question all authorities agree. To these two most especially the promise that Christ should be born of them was made. To Abraham (*Gen.* xii. 13; xxii. 18), which S. Paul teaches us to understand of Christ (*Galatians* iii. 17): to David (2 *Kings* vii. 12; 1 *Paralip.* xvii. 11; *Psalm* lxxxviii. 4; cxxxi. 11). For the condition which follows verse 12 does not apply to Christ as if He were not to reign if the sons of David did not keep the commandments of God. The kingdom was rent because they did not keep them (3 *Kings* xii. 20). The promises were made to David and Abraham by name, because the promises of the Messiah, which, as the Jews knew were made to them, were, as S. Matthew taught, fulfilled in Christ. This was the Gospel, the good message which He brought to them. So say S. IRENÆUS (viii. 18), S. AMBROSE (*Comment. on S. Luke* iii.), S. CHRYSOSTOM (*Hom.* ii. *on S. Matthew*), S. JEROME (*in loc.*).

2. To the second question all do not give the same answer. Some say that when the Evangelist had named Christ, and

sought to ascend to the first source, Abraham, he in the ascent found David, as it were another fountain from which Christ the living water flowed, and he necessarily named him. This opinion S. Chrysostom mentions (*Hom.* ii. *on S. Matthew*) and refutes, because, in the same manner, S. Luke would have related the generations of Christ, whilst it appears that he followed the contrary plan. S. Luke ascends from Christ to God, not that he may descend again, but that he may remain there. Against which plan, Moses, when he had come, as it were, from heaven to earth as by one bound, saying, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," again ascended from earth to heaven *pedetentim* (step by step), through the generation of each created object. The earth was void and empty.

S. JEROME thinks that this was done lest, if S. Matthew had named Abraham before David, Abraham would have had to be named again, that the steps of the descent might be derived from him; and the Evangelist would have been compelled to return again from David to Abraham, and from Abraham again to David—the son of Abraham; the son of David; "but Abraham begat," &c. This view has its supporters, but it does not appear satisfactory. The Hebrews certainly in enumerations often put the names of those last from whom they begin; as, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth: and the earth," &c.

S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius give a better reason: that although there was a promise both to Abraham and to David, that to David was higher and greater than that to Abraham, and was therefore more pleasing to, and more valued by, the Jews. The promise to Abraham was of a multitude of descendants; to David, of a perfect throne and a kingdom which the King of kings and the Lord of lords should possess for ever, who should save His people and break in pieces the Gentiles. All therefore knew that the Messiah was to be the Son of

David. The Pharisees, when asked by Christ (*S. Matthew* xxii. 42), "What think you of Christ, whose Son is He?" immediately answered, "David's". The multitude, when they saw the wonderful works of Christ, said, "Is not this the Son of David?" and, therefore, when He entered Jerusalem, they cried out, "Osanna to the Son of David".

And it may be observed, that all who sought any good from Christ termed Him "the Son of David," to show that He was the Messiah who would heap benefits on His people (*S. Matthew* ix. 27; xv. 22; xx. 30, 31; *S. Mark* x. 47, 48, *et passim*). When, therefore, God said that His kingdom should endure for ever, He said so not for the sake of Abraham, but of David (3 *Kings* xi. 12, 13, 32, 34; xv. 4, *et al.*).

When, then, the Evangelist had mentioned Christ, he immediately added, "the Son of David," to show that he did not speak of any Christ whatever, but of Him only who was so looked for, and who was to be the Son and successor of David in his kingdom for ever.

3. To the third question, many say that the genitive *Filii* refers to Christ; as if S. Matthew had said, "The Book of the generations of Jesus Christ, who was the Son of David and Abraham". S. Jerome so understood it; but the Hebrew idiom is against this, which S. Matthew no doubt followed here. The Hebrews always, in recounting their genealogies, refer the last genitive to the nearest father (*e.g.*, 1 *Kings* i. 1; 1 *Paralip.* i. 47, *et al.*). Why does S. Matthew call David the son of Abraham, when the genealogy is not of David, but of Christ? He does so of necessity, because when he desired to ascend from David to Abraham he was compelled to say that David was the son of Abraham, lest he should be going up *extra viam* out of the track.

Verse 2. *Abraham begat Isaac.*

There is no mention of Ishmael or Esau, because Christ

was not descended from them. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius say that the brothers of Judas are named generally because they were Patriarchs, each of his own tribe, and were as the twelve columns of the Jewish people and of the Kingdom of Christ, and were the builders of His Kingdom. They were not, therefore, described by name as Judas was, but generally, and, as S. Chrysostom observes, as the companions of Judas. S. Ambrose thinks that Phares was named to signify the mystery of the fruitfulness of the Jewish people, because he and Zara were born at one birth. But by this reasoning Esau should have been named with Jacob.

S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact say that it was to show the mystery of the two peoples, the Jews and Gentiles, so that they would be under the twofold law of Moses and the Gospel. But the same reason would hold good also with Jacob and Esau, and even the more, because this latter mystery is described in Scripture (*Gen.* xxv. 22, 23); the former is not.

The true reason would appear to be that, in their birth, Zama put forth his hand first, though Pharez was born first. For the infants seem to have contended even *in utero matris* as to which should be the first born and the forefather of Christ, and thus the Evangelist wished to share the honour, in a manner, between them, so numbering Pharez in the genealogy of Christ, as not to exclude Zara, but by his narration to reserve for him his own rights that he appeared to have, in the one way in which he was able to do so. For it was great praise to have been so nearly the forefather of Christ.

A similar event happened in the birth of Esau and Jacob: for Jacob, in his mother's womb, held the heel of Esau, as if endeavouring to be born first; but he did not succeed like Pharez, nor did he gain the primogeniture by right or his own strength, but by the stratagem of his

mother, the grace of God, and the fault of his brother. There was another reason why Zara should be numbered rather than Esau: Esau not only recklessly sold his right to the ancestorship of Christ, but he also, still more recklessly, separated himself from the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and founded a people alien to the people of God, and, as it were, another Church, as the heretics have done.

Verse 3. *Of Thamar.*

S. Jerome has observed that, in the whole genealogy of Christ, excepting only His most holy Mother, who was named of necessity, there is no mention of holy women, but of such only as Holy Scripture reprehends: Thamar, who acted to Juda as a harlot; Ruth, who, before her lawful marriage, lay with Booz; Bersabee, who committed adultery with David. The reason of this may have been that of the other women there need be no doubt, because they were all Jewish women and lawful wives, and none can doubt that the sons mentioned by the Evangelist were born of them. He may have doubted of Rahab, because she was an alien and a harlot; of Bersabee, because she was an adultress; of Ruth, because she was a Moabitess; of Thamar, because she conceived *extra legitimum.* He passed by what was ordinary and to be understood *per se,* but he states at length all that was singular and doubtful. This he has done in other passages than this (e.g., *infra*, verse 25).

Verse 5. *And Salmon begat Booz of Rahab.*

A doubt has been raised here as to whether or not this were the Rahab of Jericho (*Joshua* ii. 1, 2), or another of the same name. She is named only as having been a harlot, a stranger, and a benefactor of the Jews. A few have thought that she was not a harlot, but a publican, which the Hebrew would allow. But there is no sufficient proof of this, and the probabilities are against it (*e.g.*, the LXX.;

Heb. xi. 31 ; *S. James* ii. 25) and the Chaldean version which these Apostles follow. Kimshi adds that the publican women were often harlots.

But here arises another question : How did Salmon marry Rahab, an alien and a harlot?—a thing prohibited by the law (*Exod.* xxxiv. 16 ; *Deut.* vii. 3 ; 3 *Kings* xi. 2). It has been answered that, though she had been a harlot, she had ceased to be such, and then Salmon might have married her. For the prohibition was not of Gentile women, as such, but as they were idolaters, and Rahab would appear to have renounced idolatry and become a Hebrew woman (*Joshua* ii. 11). David married Maacha, the daughter of Tholmal, King of Gessur (2 *Kings* iii. 3). The same would apply to Ruth as a Moabitess.

And Obed begat Jesse.

It has been doubted how, between Salmon and David, there are mentioned only three names—Booz, Obed, Jesse —for it appears that there were 366 years between them. For the building of the Temple was begun 480 years after the Exodus, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Subtract from these 480 years, four of Solomon's reign after the death of David (3 *Kings* vi. 1), the 70 years of David's life, the 40 years' wandering in the desert before Jericho was taken, which happened immediately on their having crossed the Jordan (*Joshua* vi. 1, 5), and the result will be 366. The truth probably is, that those four, especially in those times, lived for the space of 366 years, and if we include Salmon, and he was probably a young man when he married Rahab, they would have lived less than 100 years each. Moses at the same time (140 years before), with all his cares and labours, had lived to 120 (*Deut.* xxxiv. 7).

Jesse seems to have been in a humble position, as Saul often called David, as a disgrace, the Son of Jesse—as in 1 *Kings* xx. 27-30, 31 ; xxii. 7, 8, 9, *et al.* He was

chosen to be a root of the kingdom of CHRIST, as in *Isaiah* xi. 1.

David the King.

David is called "the king," although there were many others who are numbered among the kings, because to him first, and alone, the promise of a perpetual kingdom was given (2 *Kings* vii. 12; *Psalm* lxxxviii. 4; cxxxi. 11). Saul reigned before David, but he did not belong to the flock of *Christ*, and he was chosen, not by the divine will, but by the desire of the headstrong people: so as to appear the king, not of the kingdom of GOD, but of the Jews, and as if he had been given by GOD for a time until David grew up, who, as GOD knew, would be a king after His own heart; and that the Jews might appear to have brought a yoke upon themselves, and not had it forced upon them by GOD.

Of her that had been the wife of Urias.

It may appear strange why the Evangelist did not call Bethsabee by her name, but used a form of circumlocution to describe her. The reasons may have been (1) that he wished to relate the event truly as it happened: that Solomon was born of Bethsabee, who, although she had previously been the wife of Urias, was not so then, but the lawful wife of David, as Solomon was born of her; and (2) that it might not be thought that he was born in adultery.

Thus some think that the meaning would have been clearer if it had been rendered "fuerat" instead of "fuit uxor Uriæ". For if it had been said of her "erat," it might have been supposed that she was the wife of Uria when Solomon was conceived by her; but the first renders it clear that she had been such previously, but was not such when she conceived Solomon. There is, therefore, no fault in our version, though, as before said, we may confess that it might have been better to read "fuerat".

Verse 8. *And Joram begat Ozias.*

Joram did not beget Ozias but Ochozias, and Ochozias Joas, and Joas Amasia, and Amasia Ozias, who is said to have been begot by Joram (4 *Kings* viii. 24; xi. 2; xii. 21; xiv. 21; 1 *Paralip.* iii. 1; xxxvi. 1). Ozias was called also Azarias.

Two questions arise here: (1) Why the Evangelist passed over three kings in the direct line of the genealogy, Ochozias, Joas, and Amasia? (2) How he says that Joram begat Ozias, when Ozias was begotten, not by Joram but by Amasia?

Answer to Question 1.—One answer is that the Evangelist did this to include all the generations to Christ in fourteen, and that these were passed over rather than others, because they were sinners and had mixed the royal blood of Judah with that of Achab. This is the opinion of S. Hilary and S. Jerome, and it is followed by others.

It may be thought that they should rather have been excluded because they were born of the seed of Achab, for Joram begat Ochozias of the daughter of Achab, and Ochozias begat Joas, and Joas Amasia, and Amasia Ozia, and therefore they seem to have been passed over, not for their own sins so much as for the sins of Achab, or, to speak more truly, because of the word of God when He threatened, by Elias, to cut off the posterity of Achab for ever (3 *Kings* xxi. 2), that is to the fourth generation, which ended in Amasias. For the wife of Joram, the daughter of Achab, was the first generation, Ochozias the second, Joas the third, Amasias the fourth. So on the contrary Jehu, though a wicked king, because he cut off the posterity of Achab, was promised the throne to the fourth generation. These three kings, then, were not mentioned because, although they lived and reigned, they were slain, and condemned by divine judgment as civilly dead.

But another question yet remains: Ochozias is not said in Scripture to have been the son of the daughter of Achab, but of Athalia, the daughter of Amri, King of Israel (4 *Kings* viii. 26; xi. 1; 2 *Paralip.* xxii. 2, 10). If so neither Ochozias nor Joas and Amasias, who followed him, were of the line of Achab, and therefore were not passed over on that account.

The answer is that Athalia, the mother of Ochozias, was not the real daughter of Amri, but of Achab, and was called the daughter of Amri, being his granddaughter. This is a common Hebraism.

For Achab was the son of Amri (3 *Kings* xvi. 29). The reasons of the above answer are: (1) Scripture says plainly that Joram married the daughter of Achab (4 *Kings* viii. 18), and he had no other wife of whom Ochozias could be born; (2) That Jehu, in obedience to the divine command to cut off the house of Achab, slew Ochozias, King of Judah (4 *Kings* ix. 27). He would not have done this had Ochozias not been of the family of Achab, especially when he had no hostility against him. Scripture, perhaps, would not have Athalia called the daughter of Achab, but rather of Amri, because the memory of Achab was execrated; and it would not appear to contradict itself when it said that all its posterity were cut off. For all were cut off who were in Samaria; but Athalia, who was in Jerusalem, could not be put to death by Jehu, although she did not escape the divine justice; for soon after, when Joas, her son, entered on the kingdom, she was put to death (1 *Kings* xi. 16). R. R. David and Levi, among others, take this view.

There is another difficulty still remaining: How Joram is said to have begotten Ozias, when not he but Amasia did so?

The answer may be that the word "begot" is to be taken not literally but in a general sense; as when Adam is said

to have been the father of all men, that is, not *ipse per sese*, but through his sons and descendants.

Verse 11. *And Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren.*

This passage is more difficult than is generally supposed. Infidels have taken advantage of it. Porphyry especially urged it against the Christians as unanswerable (S. Jerome on *Dan.* i.). Josias was especially commended (4 *Kings* xxii. 2; 2 *Paralip.* xxxiv. 2). He revived the temple worship, abolished idolatry, restored the Book of the Law through Helcias the high priest (4 *Kings* xxii. 8; 2 *Paralip.* xxxiv. 14), and it is said that Jeremiah wrote the *Book of Lamentations* on his death. He had four sons (1 *Paralip.* iii. 15): (1) Johanan, also called Joachaz (4 *Kings* xxiii. 30, 31); (2) Joachin; (3) Sedecias, previously called Matthanias (4 *Kings* xxiv. 17); (4) Sellum. Hence the question: *How is he* (Josias) *here said to have begotten Jechonias, as none of his sons were so called?* S. Ambrose (*Comment. on S. Luke*, lib. iii.); S. Epiphanius (*Hær. in Sect. Epicur.*); S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 4); Euthymius (*in loc.*), with many others of authority, both ancient and modern, think that Joachim, the second son of Josias, was also called Jechonias.

But we do not find in the Canonical Scriptures that Joachim, the son of Josias, was ever called Jechonias. He was previously called Eliacim (4 *Kings* xxiii. 34). But Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, when he had killed his father Josias, bound Joachaz, Josias' eldest son, and led him away to Egypt, making Eliacim King of Judah, and changing his name to Joakim. He had a son Joakin, the same name, except that the father's name was written with a ק and the son's with כ; and he is called Jechonias (1 *Paralip.* iii. 16; *Jeremiah* xxii. 24, 28; xxiv. 1; xxvii. 20; xxviii. 4; xxix. 2; xxxi. 1), but he had no brethren.

For Nebuchodonosor, King of Babylon, when he had

brought him to Babylon, made his uncle, Matthanias, king, changing his name to Sedecias (4 *Kings* xxiv. 17), but Pharaoh would doubtless have made a brother king, if Joakin had had one. These facts almost compel us to believe that we ought to read, "Josias begat Joakim and his brothers". For, as many admit the passage to be corrupt, and that one generation is wanting, as we shall shortly state, it appears the duty both of prudence and religion not to invent names for the correction of particular passages, but to take them from the Sacred Writings.

Esdras, indeed, calls Joacim the son of Josias *Jechonias* (iii.; *Esdras* i. 34). Euthymius cites this, from which we find that he had that book in Greek, which we want, unless he, as a Greek, read the Latin as we Latins read the Greek. But the book has no ecclesiastical authority, and in all copies Jechonias is erroneously written for Jeconias. For if the name had to be enlarged, as from Joachim is produced Jechonias, so should Jechonias, or rather Jeconias, have been produced from Joacim. And as this latter mistake has crept into the text, the former might have done the same, and Jechonias have been written for Joacim. All is correct if we read, "Josias begot Joacim and his brethren".

What arises from the explanation of the second question, which has its origin from this, is more clear. All authorities justly wonder how it is that when the Evangelist says that he has recounted thrice fourteen (that is, forty-two) generations from Abraham to Christ, forty-one only are found.

The second question, therefore, is: Is there any generation wanting? Some answer in the negative; but they do not all prove it in the same manner. For some say that David must be mentioned twice, that he may be the end of the first and the beginning of the second tessaradecad, and also that Josias is the end of the second, and the beginning of the third. If so, and Christ be not counted, there will

be no gap, for the Evangelist did not speak of forty-two persons, but of forty-two generations.

Others include Christ, but think that Jechonias must be numbered twice: the father at the end of the second, and the son who is the beginning of the third tassaradecad (S. Augustin, *De Cons.*, ii. 4; S. Jerome, *On Dan.* i.). Others, like Theophylact, think that the Captivity should be taken as one person, and then there would be no deficiency.

The opinion of SS. Ambrose, Epiphanius, and Euthymius seems better: that there is one generation wanting. But this is not in the first tessaradecad, which is from Abraham to David, nor does the gap occur at the point of junction between the second and third tessaradecad.

The third question is: *Whether the deficiency is in the second or third tessaradecad?* If we reckon the second from Solomon to Jechonias, who is here called "the father of Salathiel," there will be a deficiency of one generation in the third tessaradecad. If we put Jechonias, the father of Salathiel, in the third, there will be a gap in the second tessaradecad. Many, therefore, think that the deficiency is here. This seems more probable, because the Evangelist describes the people under three governments: Judges, Kings, Rulers. Jechonias, the father of Salathiel, was under the kings, and was himself a king. He therefore belongs to the second and not to the third tessaradecad.

On the other hand, if Jechonias is put in the second tessaradecad, then, counting Joachim and his brethren, there would be, not fourteen, but fifteen in it. Hence, some think that the deficiency is in the second and not in the third tessaradecad, and these put Jechonias, the father of Salathiel, in the third. For, though Jechonias was a king, yet, after his father Joachim, or rather Josias his grandfather, the three kings, Joachim, Jechonias, and Sedecias, reigned, not as kings, but as servants of the king of Babylon.

Nor is it necessary that all in the first tessaradecad should have been under judges, nor all in the second under kings, nor all in the third under governors. For, in the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there were no judges, and these came under the first tessaradecad. In fact, the gap seems to have been neither in the second nor third tessaradecad, but in the space between the two. For, if there are fourteen from Solomon to Jechonias (or rather Joakim and his brethren), although from Jechonias, the father of Salathiel, to Christ, we find other fourteen generations, yet between the two tessaradecads, the words, "Joakim begat Jechonias," are wanting, which belong to neither tessaradecad, because Joakim, or Jechonias, had been already numbered in the second, and Jechonias is immediately numbered in the third.

Hence arises the fourth question: *How the omission came to exist?* Was it (1) by the Evangelist purposely? or (2) from the unusual similarity of names? or (3) by mystery? or (4) by the fault of the transcriber? As many as are the parts of the question, so many have been the opinions on it. Some think that it was done with intention, and that Joachim was omitted because he was made king, not by the people, but by Pharaoh Necho (4 *Kings* xxiii. 34; 2 *Paralip.* xxxvi. 4).

Others, that it was because, as there was mention of Jechonias, father and son, the same name had to be read twice. And thus, though it does not appear, two persons, father and son, are meant by the same name, Jechonias. So says S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 4). He says: "This was properly done, as in the corner of the second and third tessaradecad, for when, in numbering the stones of a building, we come to the corner, we count the corner stone twice". Many agree with this, and the name of an author so great must carry much weight.

The third explanation, also that of S. Augustin, is that

there was a mystery in Jechonias having been mentioned twice, as if to show, at the corner, a turning to the Gentiles.

The fourth explanation is that of S. Epiphanius. He says, and many moderns agree with him, that it was the result of the transcriber's want of care. He says that after the words, "*Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon*," the words, "Jechonias begat Jechonias," have dropped out, for when the name of Jechonias was repeated four times, the transcribers, being ignorant that both father and son were called Jechonias, and thinking the words a redundancy, omitted them. S. Epiphanius seems right in thinking the transcriber in fault, and that some words have dropped out, by which it was signified that Joachim, the son of Josia, begat Jechonia. It would appear that there is an omission, but the words dropped out were probably "Joakim begat Jechonias". For, as said above, Joakim, the son of Josias, is never called Jechonias, and thus the entire passage would be, "Josias begat Joacim and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon"; as Stapulensis says he read in an ancient Greek codex, "But Joachim begat Jechonias".

And his brethren.

They are called brethren because, although Christ did not come of them, they all held His kingdom. For Joachaz, called also, as above, Johanas, reigned three months (4 *Kings* xxiii. 30, 31; 2 *Paralip.* xxxvi. 1, 2); and Mattathias, called also Sedecias, eleven years (4 *Kings* xxiv. 17, 18; 2 *Paralip.* xxxvi. 11); Sellum only did not reign, because before he could do so, the kingdom was destroyed (4 *Kings* xxv. 7; *Jeremiah*, however (xxii. 11), says that he did reign, as we have shown *in loc.*).

In the transmigration of Babylon.

While the transmigration was imminent; for when Josias begat Joachim and his brethren, the people had not

migrated to Babylon. The transmigration took place in the third month of the reign of Jechonias, the son of Joachim (4 *Kings* xxiv. 12; 2 *Paralip.* xxvi. 10). Between the birth of Joachim, therefore, and the transmigration was a space of thirty-six years and three months. For Joachim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years (4 *Kings* xxiii. 36; 2 *Paralip.* xxxvi. 5). But all this time is called the time of the transmigration, whether because, in comparison with the kingdom, it is short; or because the kingdom of Juda had not yet fallen, but was trembling. This is properly called *ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας*, *sub transmigrationem*—that is, a little before it. It is a point of no great consequence, yet it should not be passed over, that the Evangelist reads as above, not captivity, but transmigration; because the two tribes of which the kingdom of Juda consisted were twice transferred to Babylon. The first was in the reign of Jechonia (4 *Kings* xxiv. 12; 2 *Paralip.* xxxvi. 10); then in that of Sedecia (4 *Kings* xxv. 7; *Jerem.* xxxix. 7; lii. 4). The former is properly called in Hebrew גלוה and in the Latin and Greek "transmigration," and not "captivity". The second is called in Hebrew "the captivity," because in the first, Jechonias, with all the people, freely gave himself up at the advice of Jeremiah, and went to Babylon (4 *Kings* xxiv. 12). But in the latter, in which the kingdom was utterly destroyed, the people did not give themselves up voluntarily, but were forcibly taken captive to Babylon (4 *Kings* xxv. 8; *Jerem.* xxxix. 7). It is a distinction, however, not always observed. Sometimes (as *Esdras* ii. 1) the two words are used, *ἀπὸ τῆς αἰχμαλωσέως τῆς ἀποικίας*; but as the Evangelist desired to preserve the distinction, the heretic Beza ought not to tender it, "the deportation" (Beza, *in loc.*).

Verse 12. *Jechonias begat Salathiel.*

In 1 *Paralip.* iii. 17, 18, eight sons of Jechonias are

enumerated, of whom the second is named Salathiel. In many other places Salathiel is called the son of Jechonia. But there is a question from *Jerem.* xxii. 30: "Write this man barren". This does not mean that he should be childless, as in the same chapter (verse 28) we read, "he and his seed," but that none of his children should sit on the throne. There is another question, namely, *How Jechonia when in captivity could beget sons?* The answer is that, Evil Merodach, after the death of his father Nebuchodonosor, brought Jechoniah out of prison, and treated him like a king (4 *Kings* xxv. 27, 28; *Jerem.* lii. 31, 37), in the thirty-seventh year of the transmigration, when he begat sons who are said to have been "cast into a land which they know not" (*Jerem.* xxii. 28), because they were born in captivity. For at the time of the transmigration Jechonia had a wife (4 *Kings* xxiv. 15), but probably not till then children, or Nebuchodonosor would not have put Mathanias, his uncle, on the throne, but one of his sons (4 *Kings* xxiv. 17). Thus it may have been that his grandson, Zorobabel, the son of Salathiel, may have lived on till the time of the restoration, and, when returned from captivity, have been made a ruler (1 *Esdras* iii. 2; v. 2; 2 *Esdras* xii. 1). Thus the history is perfectly self-consistent.

Verse 16. *And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary.*

Now follow the two questions: (1) *Of the genealogy of Christ;* (2) *Of the agreement of the two Evangelists SS. Matthew and Luke.*

The first question is this: If Christ were not the son of Joseph, as He was not, what has the genealogy of Joseph to Abraham to do with Him? For it was not the genealogy of Joseph, but of Christ, that was in question.* All the Ancients answer, as one, that Joseph, and Mary the Mother

* The 8vo omits all that follows to the words: "It is clear," p. 21.

of Christ were of the same tribe and family, and therefore that when SS. Matthew and Luke recount the genealogy of Joseph, they recount that of Mary and Christ also. (S. Irenæus, iii. 18; Tertullian, *Cont. Jud.;* S. Athanasius, *Epistle to Epictetus;* S. Ambrose, *De Pœn.*, ii. 8; *Comm. in Luc.*, lib. iii.; S. Augustin, *Quest.* 47 *in Jud.*, and *qq. in Nov. Test.* 86; *Cont. Faust.*, xxiii. 3, 4; S. Jerome, *in loc.;* S. Greg. Nyss., *Orat. de Nativ.;* Juvencus Poet., *Quest.* 9 *in Nov. Test.;* Damasc., iv. 15, *De Fide.*)

The opponents of the Christian faith—the Jews, Celsus, Julian, Porphyry, and others—denied this, and affirmed that Mary the Mother of God was of the tribe of Levi. For she was of kin to Elizabeth the wife of Zecharias (*S. Luke* i. 36), who was of the daughters of Aaron, and she was not, therefore, of the tribe of Juda, and much less of the family of David, like Joseph.

Our authorities most certainly show that she was of the family of David, and of the tribe of Juda. For the Evangelist S. Matthew himself, who says (i. 20) that Mary conceived, not of Joseph, but of the Holy Ghost, calls Christ the son of David (verse 1). But he could not be the son of David except through His Mother; she was, therefore, of the house of David. Besides, S. Luke (i. 35) says that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary without man, of the Holy Ghost, and (i. 23) that He was supposed to be, that is, He was not in truth the son of Joseph. The angel says the same (chap. i. 32), and Zacharias (verse 39) the same. Chap. ii. 4 says that Joseph and Mary went up out of Galilee to the city of Jerusalem, to be enrolled there, because they were of the family of David; and in the books of the New Testament, He is everywhere said, not by the multitude but by the Apostles, to be the son of David (*Rom.* i. 3; 2 *Tim.* ii. 8; *Apoc.* xxii. 16). How, then, was Mary kin to Elizabeth? S. Augustin (*Quest.* 47 *on Judges*) answers rightly that a man of the tribe of Juda, and the family of

David, married a wife of the tribe of Levi, of which marriage Mary was born. How marriages could be made among different tribes shall be explained hereafter. Thus far it is clear, that when the Evangelists relate the genealogy of Joseph, they relate that of Mary also.

The second question arises here, Why did not the Evangelists bring down the genealogy to Mary, rather than to Joseph, which would have been no more difficult in itself, and much clearer to the understanding of the descent of Christ? The Ancients gave two reasons for this: (1) It was not the custom of the Hebrews to deduce genealogies through females. But this genealogy might have been deduced to Mary *per viros*. And Mary herself, because she conceived of the Holy Ghost *præter consuetudinem*, might have been numbered *præter consuetudinem*. (2) This reason, which, however, is not sufficient of itself, is strengthened by another, that it was the law (*Numb.* xxxvi. 7) that a man should marry his wife from his own tribe, that the property might not be diverted from one tribe to another. Joseph, as a just man, would have observed this. So say SS. Jerome, Ambrose, Augustin, and others, as above. But this law was not observed even by the most just. For the parents of Mary, the most holy Mother of Christ, were just persons, yet, though they were of the tribe of Judah, they contracted marriage with that of Levi. David was a just man, yet, though he was of the tribe of Juda, he married Michol the daughter of Saul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin (1 *Kings* viii. 27; ix. 1). Joiada the high priest was a just man, and yet he received in marriage the daughter of Joram the king, of the royal tribe of Juda (2 *Paralip.* xxii. 11). Moreover, the law applied only to women who, not having brothers, succeeded to the heritage (S. Ambrose, *In Luc.*, lib. iii.). Thus it must be proved that Mary was an heiress for her to be unable to marry out of her own tribe. But even

this would not be sufficient to solve the question; for if Blessed Mary were of the same tribe, it does not follow that she was of the same family.

The answer is, that the law and its interpretation were true, and that the marriages which are alleged by the opponents were formed among different tribes, because in them the requirements of the law had no place. But it was so well known that Joseph and Mary were not only of the same tribe, but also of the same family, that the Evangelists have not mentioned it.

The law (*Numb.* xxxvi. 6, 7) is to be understood not only of the same tribe, but of the same family, that when a woman is sole heiress, she could only be married to a man of the same family, and who was also her nearest relative. It prohibited marriages out of the same tribe, lest the possessions, which, by the will of God, had been equally distributed among the tribes (*Joshua* xix.), should be disturbed. The same rule held in each family, which had received equal portions of land in the same tribe. This is the meaning of the frequent expression of Josue, *per cognationes suas.* S. Hilary (*Can. in Matt.*) says that Mary was married to Joseph, *ex lege.* Eucherius (ix. 2, *On S. Matt.*), Theophylact, Euthymius (*In Comm.*), explain the law not of the same family; but Holy Scripture itself decides the question (*Numb.* xxxvi. 8).* It is clear both from tradition and Scripture that the Blessed Virgin had no brothers, or Scripture would have mentioned them.

The conclusion, then, is that the Evangelists were content with giving the genealogy of Joseph, which was certain, and well known to be the same as that of the Blessed Virgin, and in this SS. Matthew and Luke agree.

Let us now come to those points on which the Evangelists seem to differ. They are many in number.

* The 8vo here returns to the text of the folio.

1. S. Matthew calls Joseph the son of Jacob: S. Luke of Heli.

2. From Joseph to Zorobabel, S. Luke gives different names of the forefathers of Christ to those of S. Matthew.

3. S. Matthew gives only nine generations from Joseph to Zorobabel: S. Luke eighteen.

4. S. Matthew calls Salathiel the son of Jechonia: S. Luke of Neri.

5. From Salathiel to David, S. Matthew gives different names to S. Luke; and S. Matthew reaches David through Solomon, S. Luke through Nathan.

6, S. Matthew stops at Abraham: S. Luke goes up to Adam and God.

7. S. Matthew comes down from father to son: S. Luke goes up from son to father.

For the first divarication, S. Augustin (*Quest.* 5 *de Evang.* and *Consens.*, ii. 2, 3) says that it may be answered in three ways: 1. That Heli is called the father of Joseph by S. Luke, not as having actually been so, but because he was the father-in-law of Joseph, and the father of Mary; and Jacob, by S. Matthew, because he was his actual father. Others have followed S. Augustin. But it is clear that the Evangelists desired to describe the true descent of Joseph. 2. The second answer of S. Augustin is, that Joseph was the son of one by nature, and of the other by adoption, like Ephraim and Manasses (*Gen.* xlviii. 5. 6), who were the sons of Joseph by nature, and of Jacob by adoption, and therefore, like the other Patriarchs, each formed his own tribe. This is at least probable, and may be received, if no better explanation offer. 3. The third answer is, that Joseph was the actual son of one, and the son by the law of the other; for Jacob and Heli were brothers, and one died without children, and the other married his widow according to the law (*Deut.* xxv. 5). From this marriage Joseph was born, who is, therefore, called the son, sometimes

of his actual father, and sometimes of him whose wife was his mother. This explanation was generally received by the kindred of Christ themselves, as Africanus says. He adds, in a letter to Aristides, that it was also approved by the Ancients (S. Justin, Mart., *Quest.* 66 *ad Orth.;* Eusebius, *History*, i. 7; S. Jerome, *in loc.;* S. Ambrose, *On Luke* iii.; Eucherius, *Quest.* 3 *on Matthew;* Damas, *De Fide,* iv. 15; Bede, *On S. Luke* x.; Theophylact, *On S. Luke* iii). The only wonder is that S. Augustin alone did not receive it (*Quest.* 5 *de Evang.*), at least until the end of his life (*Retract.*, ii. 7).

It is often asked whether Jacob or Heli were the actual father of Joseph. Some say that Heli was the actual, and Jacob the legal, father; as, among the Ancients, S. Ambrose, and others mentioned by S. Augustin in *Quest.* 56 *in Nov. Test.*, and many others more recent. But these are among heretics who gladly turn from the *via regia.* All others think that Jacob was the actual, and Heli the legal, father. Mathan, who is called by S. Matthew the father of Jacob, and Matthat, whom S. Luke calls the father of Heli, had the same wife, whom, as a widow, or as having been put away by one, the other married; by her Mathan had Jacob, and Matthat Heli. These, Jacob and Heli, were therefore brothers by the same mother, whose name was said to have been Hesta, but not by the same father. Heli married and died without children; Jacob, according to the law, married his widow and had Joseph. This opinion, both as having more and greater authorities, and a better basis, seems much the more probable.

It is clear that S. Matthew, by his mention at the beginning of David, intended to show the continuation of the royal line to Christ, which would be proved much more clearly if Jacob were the actual than if he were the legal father of Joseph.

Then again, as S. Augustin and Africanus have observed,

S. Matthew has used deliberately the word "begat"; S. Luke seems, equally *de industria*, to have avoided it. This, though not conclusive, renders it probable that S. Matthew wrote earlier than S. Luke; and it is also probable that he who did this would have named the actual father; and the other, after mention of the actual, have inserted the name of the legal father.

For the second divarication three reasons are generally given. Some think that S. Luke mentioned different names of the ancestors of Christ from Joseph to Zorobabel to those of S. Matthew, because the persons enumerated had *two names*, and that S. Matthew gives one, and S. Luke the other. This opinion has the authority of Philo. There were, no doubt, many who had two names, but this would involve not merely a few but all having had such. Others say that S. Matthew gives the royal, and S. Luke the priestly, line (S. Augustin, *Cons.*, i. 2; S. Ambrose, iii., *On Luke;* Pomerius, ditto). But it does not appear that Christ had any part in the tribe of Levi, and many eminently learned Catholics have expressly denied it, because S. Paul (*Hebrews* vii.) denies it through the whole chapter. The assertion (in *Luke* i. 36) that the Blessed Virgin was related to Elizabeth can easily be explained by saying that the father or grandfather of Elizabeth, a priest of the tribe of Levi, married a wife of the tribe of Juda and of the family of David, from which Elizabeth was born; and she was thus related to the Blessed Virgin on that side, as she was of the family of David: but not on the other, on which she was of the tribe of Levi. And S. Ambrose supposes Elizabeth to have been related to the Blessed Virgin in no other way than as each was of the tribe of Juda. Again, we do not find that any of those whom S. Luke mentions as her parents was a priest. But if he had been giving a priestly history, he ought to have mentioned priests first of all.

3. The third reason is, that one of the Evangelists relates the natural, and the other the legal, origin of Christ. This opinion appears to be, *in genere*, one, but *in specie* and development, threefold, for—(*a*) Some say that S. Matthew gives the natural, S. Luke the legal, source; the former through Solomon, the son of David, naturally: the latter through Nathan, the son by adoption. This is the opinion of N. de Lyra; but whence derived I know not, for Scripture makes Nathan, not the legal, but the actual son of David. (*b*) Others think that S. Luke relates the natural, and S. Matthew the legal, ancestors, and, therefore, that there are fewer in S. Matthew than in S. Luke, because legal ancestors are always fewer than natural. The followers of this opinion would have those who are mentioned by S. Matthew to be called legal ancestors, because the successors of Solomon came to an end in King Ochozia (4 *Kings* ix. 27); for Joas, who reigned after him (4 *Kings* xi. 12; 2 *Paralip.* xxiii. 11), although called the son of Ochozia, was not the true son, but, because he was born from David through Nathan, and touched Ochozia in the nearest degree, he was called his son. There remains, however, the third opinion (*c*), which seems the most probable of any, that S. Matthew recounts the natural, S. Luke the legal, genealogy; not that all whom S. Luke mentions were legal ancestors, but that S. Matthew numbers Jacob, who was the natural, and S. Luke Heli, who was the legal, father of Joseph.

The third divarication has been answered in different ways. The idea of those mentioned above, that fewer ancestors of Christ are mentioned by S. Matthew than by S. Luke, because the latter speaks of the natural, and S. Matthew of the legal, parents, who as such are fewer in number than the natural, however easy, has no sure foundation, and therefore cannot be received. S. Ambrose (iii., *On S. Luke*) and S. Augustin (lib. i., *Quest. in Gen.*, q. 121) think, with

much more reason, that those whom S. Matthew enumerates were of longer life than those who are mentioned by S. Luke. Besides, S. Matthew has designedly passed over three kings (verse 8).

The fourth divarication has commonly been answered thus. Salathiel was the son of Jechonia naturally, but of Neri by adoption. More probably, perhaps, it was that Jechonia, though Scripture does not say so, married the daughter of Neri, who was descended from David through Nathan, and from this marriage was born Salathiel, who was really the son of Jechonia, but is called the son of Neri as being the son of his daughter, as is stated in verse 8. It is said that Athalia was the daughter of Amri, because she was his granddaughter. When S. Luke, therefore, saw that S. Matthew had carefully brought down the origin of Christ from David through Solomon, he desired to show the same through Nathan, to prove that Christ was every way the son of David, and either way the successor to his kingdom. But when he came to Salathiel, who derived his origin from David only on the mother's side through Nathan, he would not mention his mother, according to the custom mentioned above, but he counted his grandfather as his father.

The fifth divarication can be answered in the same way as the second.

The sixth divarication—Why S. Matthew stops at Abraham, while S. Luke goes up to God, has been answered thus: S. Luke desired to show that Christ had no other father than God, and therefore stopped at God. But S. Matthew took into account the promises that had been made to David and Abraham, as has been said on verse 1 (S. Ambrose, *In Luc.*, lib. i., and Theophylact, *in loc.*). Three other reasons suggest themselves.

1. That S. Luke desired to show his diligence and good faith. For the tracing of the history of Christ from the

beginning of the world was a proof of the former, and it increases the trustworthiness of history.

2. He regarded the first promise in *Genesis* iii. 15, "He shall crush thy heel," and wished to go back to Adam, as by his sin the original cause of the coming of Christ (1 *Cor.* xv. 47). He may also have had in his mind the manner of the births, for Adam was made of virgin earth, and Christ of the Virgin Mary, and each had God alone for his Father.

3. He wished to trace back the advent of Christ, not to natural causes, but to the eternal predestination of God; for the Son of God was predestinated from all eternity; the Lamb was slain from the beginning of the world (*Rom.* i. 4; *Apoc.* xiii. 8).

The seventh divarication is easy. It was the custom of the Jews, when recounting genealogies, to begin with the last named—as, out of many others, 1 *Paralip.* v. When, therefore, S. Matthew, for reasons explained on verse 1, had named Abraham last, he proceeded downwards to Christ; but S. Luke, when he had said, "And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years" (iii. 23), continued the account by ascending to God.

Verse 17. *So all the Generations.*

1. Two points have to be explained to make the meaning clear.

(1) Why all the generations are divided into three tessaradecads.

(2) Why there is a direction to this, which every reader could see for himself by counting.

One reason for this is given by all authorities; other reasons are given by others.

The one reason is, that S. Matthew wished to show the threefold state of the people under—(1) judges, (2) kings, (3) rulers and priests—a sufficiently clear and obvious

reason, and the more probable because so many different opinions have concurred on it. But other reasons, which have been suggested by other authorities, must not be overlooked. S. Augustin thinks it a mystery, in which our whole life is shown by the number *forty*. For if Christ be not numbered, and Jechonias, whom he thinks to be numbered twice, be numbered but once, there will be found to be forty persons. But Origen and S. Jerome think with greater probability that these *forty-two* generations answer to the forty-two mansions or journeys of the Israelites in their passage from Egypt to the Promised Land. For by so many generations, like steps, the children of Abraham reached the promised haven of safety.

But S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* iv. *on S. Matt.*) seems to come the nearest to the truth. He says that the Evangelist desired to show that God, before He sent His Son, had tried all ways of ruling His people, and keeping them to their duty by all classes of rulers—by judges, by kings, by leaders, and by priests; and when nothing succeeded, He sent His Son. This agrees with the parable (*S. Matthew* xxi. 33; *S. Luke* xx. 9), where the Lord sent three classes of servants into the vineyard, and when they failed, at last He sent His Son.

2. Two reasons may be given why the Evangelist most especially gave a summary of the generations: (1) That we might understand that there was a mystery in it; (2) that no one might think that he had passed over those three kings from error or forgetfulness. He might also have wished to prevent the generations of Christ from being corrupted by diminutions or additions.

Verse 18. *Now the Generations of Christ.*

Some Greek copies add *Ἰησοῦ*, but S. Chrysostom and Theophylact do not read it. Euthymius, however, does. The present version seems preferable as being more ancient

and agreeing better with what has gone before, *from the transmigration of Babylon to Christ.* Because the Evangelist had numbered the generation of Christ with that of others, lest any should think that He was born in the same manner as they, he describes the peculiar method of His birth. "Now the generation of Christ was in this wise," *i.e.*, not as others. "When as His Mother Mary." To the same effect he speaks of Christ's Mother, signifying that He had no father, and, with the same care as he had said (in verse 16), "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who was called Christ".

When as His Mother Mary was espoused.

The Greek reads μνηστευθείσης γάρ, but the word γάρ is not in our version, and rather interferes with the meaning. Some, considering the strict meaning of the word μνηστευέσθαι and γαμεῖν, think that the Blessed Virgin, when she conceived Christ, was not married, but only betrothed. For the Greek words μνηστευέσθαι and γαμεῖν differ like the Latin *desponderi* and *nubere.* These think that Joseph had not yet brought Mary home, and that this is the meaning of verse 20, as if he had not yet married her. Of this opinion were Origen (*Homily in Evang.*), S. Hilary (*in loc.*), S. Basil (*Hum. Nat. Christi*), S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, lxxxviii.); but the opinion of S. Chrysostom, The Author (*Hom.* i.), S. Ambrose (ii., *In Luc.*), Theophylact (*in loc.*), and almost all others, that she was then married, is to be preferred. The Holy Spirit willed Christ to be born of a married woman, to preserve the honour of the Blessed Virgin, which would not have been done if she had only been espoused; and Joseph is called ἄνηρ αὐτῆς (verse 19), not νύμφιος, or *sponsus*, while she is called γύνη, wife of Joseph (verse 20).

S. Matthew, therefore, uses the word μνηστευθεῖσαν, *sponsam*, of the Blessed Virgin, not as if she were not married, but, as S. Chrysostom very rightly observes, because she was

not known by her husband, otherwise than *sponsæ*, who are not yet married. But we cannot accept the view of SS. Chrysostom and Bernard when they say that it was the custom of the Hebrews for sons-in-law to live in the houses of their fathers-in-law before marriage. They urge the case of the sons-in-law of Lot (*Gen.* xix. 14) as their authority, but Scripture does not say that they lived in his house. Doubtless then, as all, or the best, authorities hold, the marriage of Joseph and Mary when Christ was conceived was a true one; as S. Augustin proves against Julian the Pelagian, who defined marriage to be *concubitus*.

Why Christ pleased to be born *ex nupta* is easily understood, but there are *five* especial reasons for it.

1. That given by S. Ambrose: Christ would rather that His own birth should be doubted than His mother's honour. "For He preferred to be thought the son of Joseph to being thought the son of an immodest mother."

2. That He might not appear to be *spurius*. For if the Jews despised Him as the son of a carpenter, what would they not have done in this case?

3. That Joseph and Mary might have the care and custody of the Infant. Thus when anything was to be done, the word of the Lord came to Joseph, and not to Mary (*S. Matt.* ii. 13, 19); and when the Child was lost, He was sought for by Joseph (*S. Luke* ii. 48).

4. That Joseph might be a witness to the virginity of Mary. For no one could have been so worthy of belief in asserting her chastity as he who was her guardian. He ought to have known, and he could have known it better than any other. For it would have been more likely that Joseph, with the natural zeal of a husband, would have suspected unchastity where it was not, than have defended it where it was.

5. The fifth reason, acknowledged by almost all authorities, is that the mystery of Christ's birth might be concealed from the devil, lest he should lay snares for the Infant. But

the question is, how the devil could be ignorant of the virginity of the Blessed Virgin when he could have seen that she was pure and incorrupt though married.

Before they came together.

S. Hilary explains this to mean, before they had come together in *conjugis nomen.* But it has been shown that they were fully married, and therefore the words "came together" must mean here, as S. Jerome says, *rem matrimonii exercere.* The Evangelist wished to give the reason of Joseph's desire of putting Mary away privately before they came together. This was the argument chiefly relied upon by those who were afterwards called *antidicomarianitæ* by S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, lxxviii.), by Jovinianus (S. Augustin, *De Hæresib.*), and by Helvidius (S. Jerome, *Lib. Cont. Helvid.*). They believed that after the birth of Christ the Blessed Virgin had sons by Joseph, who were the persons called the brothers of Christ (*S. Matt.* xii. 46-7 ; xiii. 55 ; *S. Mark* xiii. 31, 33 ; *S. Luke* viii. 19, 20). This error has been so thoroughly confuted by S. Jerome, that to attempt it again would be *actum agere.* The result is, that to say of *non factum esse ante*, is not to say *factum est post.* To use an example of S. Jerome, when we say that heretics will not perform penance before they die, we do not mean that they will do so afterwards ; but we are silent on a matter that is certain, we speak of one that is doubtful. No man, assuredly, can perform penance after his death (*Psalm* vi. 6), but it is unknown whether he will do so before it. It is certain that Joseph knew not Mary after the birth of Christ, for she had no other son than Christ ; of Him there was no question. The question was, whether He were conceived by Joseph or the Holy Ghost. This was doubtful, and needed explanation. The Evangelist, then, explained what was doubtful and necessary to be known ; he passed over what was not inquired about, and was not

necessary to be told. How these persons were called the brothers of Christ shall be explained in chap. xii. 46.

She was found.

Origen (*Hom.* i. *in Evang.*) and S. Jerome (*in loc.*) say that Joseph so found her, as being her husband. But the Greek εὑρέθη does not mean finding a thing by seeking and inquiring, but rather by not seeking and not thinking, and contrarily to all opinion and expectation; as has been observed by S. Chrysostom, a good judge of the Greek language. Joseph then found the Blessed Virgin with child, not by investigation, or inquiry, or contact, but by an observation most pure and free from all curiosity. Nor is it signified that she was so found by Joseph rather than by any other, but that she suddenly and unexpectedly presented such a personal appearance that all who saw her could perceive her condition.

Of the Holy Ghost.

Some unite these words to those immediately preceding, understanding by them that Joseph not only found that Mary was with child, but that she was so by the Holy Ghost. For it is clear from what follows that he did not know by whom she had conceived, and he therefore wished to put her away. Upon this he was informed of the truth by the Angel. In this all the authorities agree.

Of the Holy Ghost.

Not that the Holy Ghost was the Father of Christ, as some, according to S. Jerome, formerly thought, but that it was caused by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Mary should conceive *sine viro.* Nor is Christ said to have been conceived by the Holy Ghost, as if He only, and not the Father and the Son Himself, who was begotten, caused His birth. For that is a true law of the ancient Fathers,

and retained by the Schoolmen, that "all the acts of the Trinity, out of Itself, were common to all the Persons". Christ is said to have been conceived by the Holy Ghost by that "attribution" which is commonly spoken of in Holy Scripture, and by which what is common to the THREE PERSONS is, on account of office or peculiar act, ascribed to one only; as the office and power of government is ascribed to the Father, of wisdom to the Son, of love, kindness, beneficence, liberality, fecundity to the Holy Ghost.

For two reasons, therefore, the conception of Christ is attributed to the Holy Ghost, both because He is the highest goodness, and the head of all benefits to men, and also because He is the work of fecundity, and He is the Life-giver. For the Holy Ghost is as a divine seed, by which all things are made fruitful, as *Gen.* i. 2: "*The spirit of God moved over the waters,*" is often explained, and is, as it were, the life and soul by which all things are animated and vivified (*Psalm* ciii. 31; *S. John* vi. 64).

There is a strong resemblance between Christ and Christians, that is, between the head and the members, which almost all ancient writers, SS. Ambrose, Augustin, Leo, have observed. Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin, Christians of the Virgin Church. The Church is the Virgin and Mother, without spot or wrinkle, like Mary (*Ephes.* v. 27). The womb is the fount of baptism; the seed of the Church is water, which produces the living soul; the Holy Ghost is the seed. As, therefore, Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Ghost, so Christians, that is, the members of Christ, ought to be reborn of water and the Holy Ghost. So *S. John* iii. 5. We may observe that one version uses the word "*De,*" "*De Spiritu Sancto,*" when we should rather have looked for "*E,*" as in verses 3, 5, 16, 20; xviii. 11, and others. "*E*" would have expressed better than "*De*" the idea of a material source.

Verse 19. *Being a just man.*

The Greek and Latin versions both admit a double meaning to these words: (1) Although he was; (2) because he was. The Latin *cum; cum esset justus,* is a causal word. The cause of the events that follow is given.

The cause of each event is given, as two events follow: (1) He would not expose her; (2) he wished to put her away privately. Some, like S. Chrysostom, think that the cause of the second clause is given, and that he wished to put her away because he was just, and would not retain one whom he suspected of adultery. SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, and others of authority, thought that it was not lawful for a man to put away a wife who was an adulteress. And it was ordered by some decrees of the Church that this should not be done. Others, SS. Jerome, Ambrose, Theophylact, think that the reason of the first clause is given. This seems much more probable. For the words, "*He would not expose her,*" are opposed ἐξηγητίκως to saying, "*He was a just man,*" and therefore would not expose her, but began to think of some other manner of putting her away. The opinion of S. Chrysostom is abandoned, not only by divines, but by the whole Church. For the law permitted the putting away of an adulteress, but did not command it, Christ Himself so explaining it (*S. Matt.* xix. 8; *S. Mark* x. 5).

It will be said, If the law permitted it, it was lawful to accuse the adulteress. Hence Joseph, though a just man, was able, *salva justitia,* to do this. Joseph was called a just man, not because he was endowed with justice, one of the four moral virtues, but because, as S. Chrysostom says, he possessed, as a heap, every species of virtue. Whoever is of such a nature follows S. Paul, and says (1 *Cor.* x. 22), "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient".

Joseph, therefore, had the power to expose her, but he

ought not to have done so, because it was an act of greater charity to put her away privately. Because he was a just man, that is, endowed with great charity, he would not do what justice indeed, a single virtue, allowed, but what charity, the queen of all virtues, demanded.

Publicly to expose her.

Traducere, παραδειγματίσαι, to see punished by public example, to accuse ignominiously. In a word, S. Augustin explains it by *exemplare* (*Ep.* 59), although he elsewhere paraphrases it by *divulgare solet.* S. Joseph would have done this if he had called her to judgment, and set her out before all men as an adulteress. S. Paul uses the same word (*Heb.* vi. 6), where our version reads *ostentatui habentes*, making Him a mockery. The LXX. uses the word in the same sense (*Numb.* xxiv. 4; *Esther* xiv. 8).

Was minded to put her away privately.

Origen (*Hom.* i. *on Evang.*), S. Jerome (*Comment.*), S. Bernard (*in loc.*), and others, think that Joseph wished to put her away, because he knew that she had conceived by the Holy Ghost, and that he was therefore unworthy of her society; as S. Peter said to Christ, "Depart from me" (*S. Luke* v. 8), and the centurion, "Lord, I am not worthy" (*S. Matt* viii. 8). Others, on the contrary, as S. Chrysostom (*in loc.*), S. Augustin (*Ep.* 54, *Serm.* xvi. *de Temp.*: if his), Theophylact and Euthymius think that he would have put her away as suspecting her of adultery, and that Joseph, thinking that she had conceived, not of the Holy Ghost, but of adultery, feared to receive her, lest he might either appear to approve of her crime, or because he was unwilling to bear the injury he supposed done to him (S. Chrysostom, *in loc.*, and *De S. Susanna;* S. Augustin, *Ep.* 54, *Serm.* xvi. *De verb. Dom.*, *Serm.* xviii. *de Temp.;* Theophylact and Euthymius, *Comment.*). Joseph's reason for thinking of putting her

away privately is uncertain. The reason of Abulensis, that he thought to give her a writing of divorcement privately, does not seem good, for, however privately he might have given it, every writing is, *sua natura*, public. Besides, the divorce and disgrace could not be concealed, if, after living in the same house, they had been separated, *privato judicio*, and especially at a time when Mary's condition was apparent. The opinion of those, therefore, who say that Joseph thought of retiring into a voluntary exile, under pretence of taking a journey, that he might appear not to have put her away for any fault, but to have left her from necessity, seems more probable. Not only does the λάθρα, but also ἀπολύσαι, seems to warrant this.

Verse 20. *But while he thought of these things.*

How he should put her away privately, before he had found any plan for doing so, or had followed out his design. The Evangelist seems to signify that God awaited a fit moment to send the angel. If He had sent him before Joseph knew the condition of Mary, Joseph perhaps, like Zacharias, would not have believed him. If sent after Joseph had left her, the angel would have been sent too late. God, therefore, sends the physician to the sick man neither before he begins to be amiss nor after he has died and ceased to be so. The same authors give another reason why Joseph would not have been so good a witness of the virginity of Mary if he had been warned by the angel before he thought of putting her away. For who would not have believed a husband who bore witness of the purity of his wife, and a husband who had gone so far as to suspect her of adultery, and to meditate a divorce?

It is Divine Providence which permits one man to be sick, that from his disease it may make medicine for many. It was this which permitted S. Peter and S. Thomas to fall in the faith, that we might not fall. It waited until Joseph

doubted of the chastity of Mary, lest we should doubt, as we have said on verse 19 from S. Bernard.

Why, again, was the angel sent to Mary before she conceived?

1. Probably because her consent was to be obtained before she could become the spouse of the Holy Ghost and conceive by Him.

2. Because it was not fitting that she should be ignorant whom she bore in her womb, and whence she had conceived.

3. Before that warning she could not have become the mother of Christ her Son (S. Augustin, *De Virg. Sanct.*; S. Leo, *Serm. de Nat. Dom.*). She knew Christ by faith before she conceived Him in her body, whom, unless so warned, she could not have possessed.

It has also been asked, why the angel was sent to Mary when watching and to Joseph when sleeping? Apparently faith and consent were required from Mary, as has been said. The question of Joseph is not so easy. S. Chrysostom says, with much reason, that Joseph was a just man, whom it was sufficient to warn in sleep.

Again, knowing the condition of Mary, and doubting about her, he might in a moment be led to believe that it was the work of the Holy Ghost. It may seem very strange that the Blessed Virgin did not acquaint her husband with what the angel had said to her, that she might free herself from the risk of infamy, and her husband from sinister suspicion. Here again S. Chrysostom answers, that Joseph, whilst in doubt about the purity of his wife, would not have believed her own testimony, however holy she were, of herself—as, what husband, uninformed by God, would have done so?

That which is conceived in her.

The words of the angel are directed to comfort Joseph,

who was then in trouble and perplexity, and to prove to him that it was needless for him to doubt or despond, but that he should rejoice that his wife was about to be the mother of that Messiah who had been so long looked for. The angel calls Joseph the Son of David, not only as it was a title of honour, but also to show that He who was conceived of the Blessed Virgin was of the same family, and was that Messiah who was to be the Son of David. He wished also to bring to Joseph's mind the words of *Isaiah* vii. 14, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," that he might believe and rejoice that this was accomplished in his wife.

Verse 21. *And she shall bring forth a Son.*

Τεξέται δέ—δέ seems put for *γάρ—pro*, for (as in xxiii. 5, and many other passages) the words appear to have been spoken by the angel to confirm the faith of Joseph. As if he had said: "Your wife is not the adulteress you fear, but she is that most spotless Virgin of whom Isaiah spoke (vii. 14). She shall bring forth a Son, not a daughter, and when you see this, you will not doubt that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. For when you see that what I have foretold you as future, has come to pass, you will believe that the past, of which I have told you, is also true."

And thou shalt call His name Jesus.

This additional honour was bestowed upon Joseph, that he should give His name to Him who was born not of himself, but of the Holy Ghost, as if He had been his own son. Some have said that this was done merely as it was the custom for fathers to give the children their names. This may have been the general custom, but it was not universal, for Rachel called her son Benoni (*Gen.* xxxv. 18), and his mother, not his father, gave Jabes his name, "Because I bore him with sorrow" (1 *Paralip.* iv. 9). And what is here said to Joseph is said to Mary (*S. Luke* i. 32).

And thou shalt call His name Jesus.

This is certain proof that the angel wished to honour Joseph with the duty of a father, and at the same time to prove what he had said—that the child was conceived not of him but of the Holy Ghost, and from heaven, as His name was given from heaven. To those who are conceived *divinitus* names are given before their birth from heaven. So Isaac (*Gen.* xvii. 17), S. John Baptist (*S. Luke* i. 13). From His name we are taught what manner of Infant He would be, that is, He who was sent to free His people from their sins. That is, יהושוע Jesus the Saviour. It is certain that the name Jesus was borrowed by the Greeks from the Hebrews, and by the Latins from the Greeks; for everywhere in the Old Testament יהושוע is used as a proper name. The LXX. have rendered it by *Ἰησους*, adapting the Hebrew word to the Greek, as they could, or as they knew how. In 1 *Paralip.* vii. 27 the reading is *Ἰησους*. The word signifies Salvation or Saviour; and although we read of many so called, as Jesus the son of Nave, and the son of Josedech the priest (*Agg.* i. 12-14), the name was given to them by accident, but to Christ by design, and not by human but divine design: truly saviours, but Christ was more than it signifies.

In others, therefore, the name was in some sense common and usual. In Christ it was peculiar, and as the Prophet had foretold, new and singular, because in the sense in which it was used of Christ, it was used of no other; because in no other is there salvation; and by it His divine and human natures are both signified, as well as His most excellent office of Redeemer (*Philipp.* ii. 10).

It has been rightly observed, therefore, that the Evangelists, when they desire to describe our Saviour by His proper name, call Him, not Christ, but Jesus, as in this passage and in *S. Luke* i. 31; iii. 23; iv. 1. Christ is the name of His office, Jesus of His natures and person.

It has been asked how the angel ordered Him to be called Jesus, when Isaiah had said that His name should be Emmanuel? The Jews are the most persistent objectors to this, to prove that that prophecy does not apply to Christ. But ancient Fathers have answered the question most completely (S. Justin Mart., *Quest.* 131 *ad Orthad.;* Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, lib. iii.; Lactantius, iv. 12, *De Ver. Sact.;* S. Chrysostom, *De Incarn.*, chap. ii.). The Prophet desired to describe Him, who was to be called Christ, but who was yet to be; the Evangelist to declare Him, who was both to be called and to be Christ. The Prophet wishes to say, not that the proper name of Christ should be Emmanuel, but that the thing meant by it should fit Him, and that He should be called by it. As the same Prophet had foretold of Jerusalem (i. 26), not that it was to be called by that name, in fact, but that it should be such a city that it might be so called. In the same way he had said (lx. 14), "They shall call thee the City of the Lord, the Sion of the holy one of Israel," when it never would bear that name. Like examples are found in *Jeremiah* iii. 17; *Zach.* viii. 3; and of Christ Himself (*Isaiah* ix. 6), not that He was to have so many names, but so many offices (*Jerem.* xxiii. 6); also, "The Lord our just one," for Christ the Lord was truly "the just one," and also truly Emmanuel, which is "God with us". It is clear that the Evangelist understood that passage of Isaiah in that sense, from the fact that when he had said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," he cited the passage of Isaiah, "His name shall be called Emmanuel" (vii. 14). He is therefore Jesus and Emmanuel, for He is God with us, which is Emmanuel, and God our Saviour, which is the meaning of Jesus.

Verse 22. *Now all this.*

S. Augustin, Theophylact, and Euthymius think these the words of the angel; but they are, beyond doubt,

those of the Evangelist, who wished to prove his faith by the testimony of the Prophet.

All.

That the Blessed Virgin should conceive, and that the Infant, not yet born, should be called Jesus.

Verse 23. *Behold a Virgin.*

The Jews bring FIVE arguments against this passage.

1. Isaiah has not בתולה which is properly a virgin, but העלמה which means not a virgin but a young girl, and refers to age, not condition. To this no one has replied with more effect than S. Jerome (*In tradit. Heb. in Gen.;* lib. i., *Cont. Jovinian;* and in his *Comment. on Isaiah* vii.). He says that עלמה means not only a virgin, but more even than that, a young girl *(puella)* who has been hidden and kept carefully; who has not even met the eyes of any man, and who, not only in person but in aspect, is chaste. The origin of the word shows this; for she was called עלטה which is to hide as a virgin, to be concealed or secluded. Nor is the word ever used in Scripture of any but a virgin, as (*Gen.* xxiv. 16) of Rebecca. She is called עלמה (v. 43). The same of Mary, the sister of Moses (*Exod.* ii. 8), in the Punic language, which derives its origin from the Hebrew. Thus, בתולה means virginity alone, עלמה virginity and age together.

And this is emphatically the meaning of the Prophet, namely, that a virgin, tender as yet, and who has not met even the gaze of men, should conceive. Some add that the particle of emphasis ה is added in this place to the word עלמה which has a like force to that of the Greek article *ὁ*, signifying here, as S. Chrysostom observes, a virgin of the highest worth—one most especially a virgin.

2. The SECOND argument is that it is against all common sense to say that a virgin, remaining such, should conceive;

but one who having been a virgin before should afterwards do so. The ancient Fathers reject this as not only false, but also absurd and ridiculous; for in this case there would have been no sign, and no miracle. The Prophet intended to show a sign before unheard of and most wonderful, as in verses 7, 10, 14. So say S. Justin Mart., *Against Trypho;* Tertullian, *Against the Jews*, and III., *Against Marcion;* S. Basil (*Hom. on the Human Generation of Christ*); S. Epiphanius, *Against Ebionites;* S. Cyril Alexand. and S. Chrysostom, *On Isaiah* vii.

3. The THIRD objection is from *Isaiah*, from the name Emmanuel, which Christ had not. This objection has been answered on verse 21.

4. The FOURTH objection is that from the circumstances of place. It appears that this prophecy was uttered of the wife of Achaz and his son Ezechia, whom she was about to bring forth. S. Epiphanius and S. Jerome greatly deride this idea, for the prophecy was uttered when Achaz was reigning, and it was therefore directed to him as king. Assuming it to have been uttered in the first year of his reign, Ezechia would have been *nine years old* at least; for Achaz reigned sixteen years (4 *Kings* xvi. 2; 2 *Paralip.* xxviii. 1), on whose death his son Ezechia reigned at once (4 *Kings* xvi. 20); for he was twenty-five when he began to reign (4 *Kings* xviii. 2; 2 *Paralip.* xxix. 1). Nor is there any more in what some others say, that it was spoken of the wife of Isaiah, for she was neither a virgin, nor ever brought forth a son who was, or was called, Emmanuel.

5. The FIFTH objection is one raised by the more modern Jews. The ancients have scarcely noticed it. It was not possible that the sign could have been given to Achaz, because he would not be able to see it, for it was not to happen for eighty years.

S. Chrysostom, in his *Commentary in loc.*, answers that the sign was not given to Achaz, but to the house of David,

which was not only to endure to the time of Christ, but was to produce Christ Himself. In the beginning the Prophet offered the condition of a sign to Achab, that he should ask whatever he would; from which he might understand that God would be with him against the king of Assyria (vii. 11); and when Achaz would not ask, the Prophet changed his language, and foretold another and greater sign than that which Achaz did not venture to ask, an argument of a greater liberation, that God would give, not to Achaz, but to the house of David (verses 13, 14). As if he had said: "Because you do not care to ask God, God will give you, of His own free-will, not such a gift as I offered to the king, that God would deliver him out of the hands of the king of Assyria; but a far greater one, that He would deliver His people from sin and the tyranny of the devil". From the major is proved the minor.

And they shall call.

Some have wondered that Isaiah says "Thou shalt call," and that the Evangelist says here "They shall call," but it is of no moment, because, as S. Jerome says, the Evangelists frequently give the meaning rather than the words. Whether he had said καλέσεις, thou shalt call, or καλέσει, he shall call, or καλεσοῦσι, they shall call, the meaning would be the same.

Which being interpreted is, God with us.

It has been a question how these words should be understood. Some, with whom we cannot agree, think that they have a spiritual meaning alone—God with us, God reconciled with us (*Coloss.* iv. 2)—because our sins had separated us from Him (*Isaiah* lix. 2). But S. Chrysostom and others think, more correctly, that the words are intended to convey the doctrine of the actual incarnation of the Son of God. For God is with us not only as He gives us help

and puts away our sins—in which manner He was with the ancient Jews also—but He was the Word made flesh. Some infer from this passage that S. Matthew did not write in Hebrew, but we have answered this in the Preface, chap. v.

Verse 25. *And he knew her not.*

The Jovinians, the Helvidians, the Ebionites, and, as *Auctor Imperfecti Operis* says, the Eunomians, take occasion from these words to assail the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin after the birth of Christ (v. 18). But it need only be said that the particles "before," "before that," "until" —*antequam, prius quam, donec, usque,* and the like, do not always convey an affirmation of the thing in question afterwards, if a negative has preceded, nor a denial when an affirmative has been given before, as S. Jerome against Helvidius, and S. Chrysostom on this passage have shown by many examples. *S. Matthew* xxviii. 30 does not mean that He would not be present afterwards, but much more present; 2 *Kings* vi. 23 does not mean that Michal had a child after her death; *Psalm* cix. 1, 2, is not as if He would not sit at the right hand afterwards; *S. Matthew* v. 18 not that that word should perish after heaven and earth should have passed away. In all these cases that which is doubtful is expressed, that which is uncertain is left unsaid.

Her first-born Son.

It was another argument of the opponents of the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin, that the Evangelist calls Christ the first-born, as if after Him she had other sons, and as if there could be no first-born unless there were a second-born. S. Jerome against Helvidius rightly says that Christ is called the first-born of Mary, not because there was another son after Him, but because before Him there had been none. For it is the custom of Scripture to call the only-born the first-born, because he who is *uni-*

genitus is necessarily before others; that is, no one else could have been before him, and this is to be the first-born. So (*Exodus* iv. 22) God calls the people of Israel His first-born, as He had no others, and (xii. 29) He is said to have slain all the first-born of the land of Egypt; among these, beyond doubt, were many only-born; and (xiii. 2; xxii. 29) He commanded all the first-born to be sanctified to Him, among whom were included the only-born, otherwise such must have been waited for until others were born afterwards.

S. Paul (*Heb.* i. 6) calls Christ the first-born, for the only-born of God. The Evangelist used the expression *first-born* to show, probably, that Mary not only conceived but also brought forth as a virgin. For he had said of the conception (v. 18), "Before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost," and he now says of the birth (v. 25), "He knew her not till she brought forth her first-born son". That is, when Joseph had not known her, she brought forth her Son, who, being her only Son, is therefore most properly called her first-born, for he who opened the womb was the first-born (*Exodus* xiii. 2; xxxiv. 19); and he only opened it who found it closed, as has been said by Tertullian. The words "to have opened" should be taken not as if He literally opened it, but opened it, as it were, by being truly born.

CHAPTER II.

THE OFFERING OF THE WISE MEN—THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT—THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.

Verse 1. *When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda.*

THE Evangelist, according to the laws of history, describes the place, time, and circumstances of the event: The place—Bethlehem; the time—in the days of Herod the king; the circumstances—wise men came from the East.

Why Christ was born in Bethlehem is plain.—1. Because Micheas the Prophet had so foretold (v. 2), and He must be born on native soil to prove Himself the Ruler of whom the Prophet spoke. 2. Because David was born in the same place (1 *Kings* xvi. 1; xvii. 12), and Christ came as his successor, the restorer of His kingdom, and the flower of the root of Jesse. He must necessarily spring up where the root was. When, therefore, He was as yet scarce born, He compelled His enemies, the chief priests and scribes, if not to believe Him to be Christ, yet in a manner to profess so (verse 5). Hence, as Joseph and Mary lived not in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth, they came to Bethlehem on the enrolling of Augustus (*S. Luke* ii. 1), as if the whole world were so described, for no other reason than that the Lord of it might not be born out of His own country, (*extra*), God thus ordering it that the imperial edict should serve the cause of truth.

Juda.

Manyc opies have *Judæa*, and so S. Chrysostom, Euthy-

mius, and many others seem to read it on the authority of the greater number of copies. S. Jerome, however, with good reason, in this passage and on *Micheas* v., thinks that *Judæa* is incorrectly read for *Juda*. For Judæa included the whole territory of the twelve tribes, but Juda only that of the tribe of Juda. As there were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Juda, where David and Christ were born, and another in the tribe of Zabulon (*Joshua* xix. 15), the Evangelist clearly desired to distinguish the Bethlehem of Juda from that of Zabulon, which he would not have done if he had said Bethlehem of Judæa, for both were in Judæa, but only one in Juda.

Herod.

This was not Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee (*S. Luke* i. 5), who put John Baptist to death and mocked Christ, nor the Herod who slew James and bound Peter, but the father of the former and the grandfather of the latter; who was called "Herod the Great," "Ascalonita," "Antipater," and to whom the Romans first gave the title of King of Judæa (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xiv. 18; Hegesippus, i. 36; Eusebius, i. 6). The years were now first numbered according to the Cæsars (as in *S. Luke* iii. 1; *Acts* xi. 28), but S. Matthew, as speaking of the kingdom of Herod, makes mention of him rather than of Cæsar.

The King.

To distinguish him from the tetrarch. The Evangelist seems to wish to show that the time was now come when Christ should be born; for, as it had been foretold that the sceptre should not depart from Juda, he shows that, by the rule of a stranger, it had done so, and that the time had arrived when, according to the prophecy of Jacob, Christ should be born. So say S. Chrysostom and Theophylact.

Behold.

This particle (*ecce*) has here a twofold force. It shows

that the Magi came immediately on Christ's birth, as we shall shortly explain, and that they came unexpectedly, when, as is shown in verse 3, the city was troubled.

There came wise men from the East.

Four questions may here be asked—1. Who they were? 2. How many were there? 3. Whence did they come? 4. When? For, of the star, whatever it was, and how they knew by it of the birth of Christ, we will speak hereafter.

The first question seems to depend on another. Did S. Matthew write in Greek or in Hebrew? If in Hebrew the meaning of the word חרטמי will have to be followed; if in Greek, that of the word *μάγοι*. In the Preface, chap. v., it is proved that he wrote in Hebrew. We must see, then, who they are who are called in Hebrew חרטמי the word found in this passage. The Hebrews call חרטמי what the Latins term *præstigiatores;* that is, those who by incantations or some other art change the appearance of things so that they seem to be other than they are. Such were the magicians of Pharaoh, who by diabolical arts imitated the divine acts of Moses in transforming things (*Exod.* vii. 11, 22; viii. 7). But neither our version nor the LXX. calls these Magi, but the former in every case calls them *malefici*, the latter *φάρμακοι* or *φαρμακεῦς* (*Exod.* vii. 11; *Deut.* xviii. 10; 2 *Paralip.* xxxiii. 6; *Jerem.* xxvii. 9; *Dan.* ii. 2; *Malach.* iii. 5). But both our version and the LXX. call those Magi whom the Hebrew terms מנשף that is, those who, by inspecting the stars, foretell the future, interpret dreams (*Dan.* i. 20; ii. 10, 27; iv. 4; v. 7, 11, 15). The ancient writer calls them Magi, the Hebrews אבת Pythones, the LXX. *ἐγγαστριμίθαι* (*Levit.* xix. 31; xx. 6; 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 3, 9). We scarcely believe those of whom S. Matthew speaks to have been *præstigiatores*—a name

infamous among all nations—since the Evangelist appears to call them Magi, a title of honour.

Magi are so called from three causes. They who practise the arts, not only of natural but diabolical magic, are so termed (*Levit.* xix. 31 ; xx. 6 ; *Acts* viii. 9; xiii. 6), and in Strabo it is the name, not of any art or condition, but of a nationality ; for among the five nations who inhabited Media, he mentions the Magi. S. Epiphanius, in his *Epitome of the Catholic Faith*, does the same, except that he gives them another origin and abode ; for he says that they were the sons of Abraham by Keturah, and when sent out of the country by Abraham, they came to Magodia, a region of Arabia, and there took up their abode—hence, he thinks, they received their name. But the more ordinary meaning of the word is, that the Magi were called by the Persians, in their mother tongue, Sapientes (wise men), as among the Greeks are Philosophers ; among the Italians of Hetruria, Aruspices and Pontifices ; among the Indians, Brachmans or Gymnosophists ; among the Babylonians, Chaldæans ; among the Egyptians, Hierophants ; among the Gauls, Druids, as stated by Cicero (lib. i., *De Divin.*), Strabo (xvi.), and Tertullian (*Against Marcion*) ; in which sense, as seems very probable, and is most commonly believed, the Magi are mentioned here: both as they came from the East, where the name of Magi was famous, and were led by a star, like men who governed the whole course of their lives by the observation of the stars, in which all their wisdom consisted ; and because the Evangelist seems to have termed them Magi for reasons of honour.

Whether or not they were kings is less certain. A heretic—Beza—derides the Catholic Church because she believes them to have been such—as if *Psalm* lxxi. 10, 11, had been wrongly understood. He must, therefore, laugh at Tertullian (i., *Against the Jews*), and (lib. iii., *Against Marcion*); at S. Cyprian (*Serm. de Bapt.*), at S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* vi.

on S. Matt.), at S. Hilary, S. Basil, Idacius, S. Jerome or his contemporary (*on Ps.* xxi.), S. Augustin, or the author of bk. iii. on *The Miracles of Scripture*, Isidore, Bede, Strabus, and others. All these believe that they were kings, and put faith in that Psalm. Not that they believe them to have actually ruled over Tharsis, for that word is used for Gentile kings in general, but they think that David mentioned them *exempli gratia*, as Tertullian shows from many other examples. The Church does the like, using this Psalm in the same sense, on the feast of Epiphany, often adapting, not in ignorance but wisely and designedly, to one person what was originally said of another. She applies, for instance, the words of S. Luke (x. 42) of Mary Magdalene, the sister of Lazarus, to Mary the mother of Christ, on her festival, because she herself was a Mary, and had also chosen the best part.

That the Magi were actually kings is held, not as a certain article of the Catholic faith, but as a probable opinion ; and some learned and devout men, not scoffingly but earnestly, have held the contrary opinion. They say that if they had been kings, the Evangelist would not have forborne to mention their names, for these would have added to the honour of the worship of Christ, and that kings would have been received with greater state by Herod.

This may be granted, and still the opinion be held that they were kings ; not Persian nobles, but genuine princes who merited the titles of kings or princes ; chiefs (*regulorum*), as the man mentioned by S. John (iv. 46, 49), and as the friends of Job are called (*Tobit* ii. 15), and as S. Mark (vi. 14) called Herod, the son of Herod the Great, a king when he was not such, but tetrarch of Galilee (*SS. Matt.* xiv. 1, *Luke* iii. 1). The poet Juvencus says that they were not kings, but he admits them to have been the chiefs and nobles of their race.

We may suppose them to have been kings—(1) as they came from the East, whence private philosophers would not have taken so long a journey; (2) as they came to worship one born a king, which only princes do; (3) as they brought treasures; (4) as they were not seized by Herod as soon as they came, and dragged off to the cross; (5) it cannot be that Herod said falsely that he also would come to worship as soon as he knew where the infant was, yet he certainly pretended to be true, as if all kings ought, after the example of the Magi, to worship the new king; whereas private persons would not venture to confess before the reigning sovereign that he was born a lawful king.

But why did not the Evangelist call them kings? Why did not the author of the Book of Job call his friends kings, but the author of the Book of Tobias did? If another Evangelist had written the account of the marriage of Cana, he might perhaps have given some other name to him whom S. John called a ruler. S. Matthew might have called them Magi instead of kings, when they were both, for some other reason. He desired to give the tacit reason for their knowing from the star that it was Christ who was born. For this was the work of Magi, not of kings.

Their number is less certain. The common opinion, not only of the vulgar, but of great authorities (S. Augustin, *Serms.* xxix.-xxxiii. *de Tempore;* S. Leo, *Serms.* i., iv.-viii., *de Epiphania;* Rupertus, *Comment.*), is that they were three in number, which appears the most likely of any. It is certain that there were more than one, or even two, for the Evangelist always speaks of them as many, and he does not even use the dual number of them, but always the plural. That they were *three* is not a matter of certainty, but from the number of their gifts it is a probable conjecture; for it is more likely that they all gave different gifts than that all should have given the same—for this was more usual, and was considered more honourable both to

giver and receiver. This opinion has some reason at least to support it; the other has none.

Whence did they come? This is the third question. Although it is in great part answered by the Evangelist, there is yet some room for conjecture. Many ancient authors think that they came from Arabia (S. Justin Mart., *Adv. Tryph.;* Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.*, and iii., *Adv. Marc.;* S. Cyprian, *Serm. de Stella et Magis;* S. Epiphanius, *Epitome*). They are justly influenced in this belief by David (*Ps.* lxxi. 10): "The kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts"; and that country produces these things, Arabia and Saba having even been celebrated by the poets for their abundance of gold, perfumes, and frankincense. Others, S. Chrysostom among them, suppose them to have been Chaldæans. Their chief argument is, that it was impossible for them to have come from Persia and Arabia in the space of thirteen days. But this is scarcely tenable, for although Chaldæa lies between the North and East, it is the custom of Scripture to call it the North. The ordinary opinion, that they came from Persia, seems the best, both as having more authority, and because the word *magi* itself is a Persian one, and the Evangelist says that they came from the East. They also displayed Persian manners; for the Persians adore their kings and approach them only with gifts, as all writers on the subject inform us. How they could have performed the journey in thirteen days shall be explained hereafter.

The fourth question remains: *When did they arrive, and when did they set out?* For the question consists of these two parts. S. Epiphanius (*Hær.*, 30, 31) affirms, on the authority of verse 6, and vehemently contends for it, that they arrived two years after the birth of Christ. So too Eusebius in his *Chronicon.* The opinion of the Church is much more truth-like, that they came on the thirteenth day after the birth of Christ. So said S. Augustin (*De Epiph.*, i., ii.,

iii), and S. Leo (*Serm. Oct.*). It certainly appears that they arrived not many days after. This the Evangelist signifies when he says, "When Jesus was born, behold there came wise men". For both the connection of the sentence and the word "behold" show that the arrival of the Magi followed immediately after the birth of Christ (as in *Gen.* xxiv. 15, xxix. 9), and because it is certain that Joseph and Mary did not remain in Bethlehem beyond the forty days of her Purification as ordered by the Law (*Levit.* xii. 2). For they immediately came to Jerusalem, "to present Him to the Lord" (*Luke* ii. 22), and then returned at once to Galilee (v. 39). But the Magi found Christ in Bethlehem (*S. Matt.* ii. 9). They therefore came before the fortieth day from His birth.

2. When did they set out from their country? The opinion of S. Augustin (*Serm.* xxxii.) seems the best, that they did not leave their country till after the birth of Christ. Their words, "We have seen His star in the East," seem to imply this. But when it is proved that they offered their worship thirteen days after, it follows that they could not have been longer than eight or nine days on the road; for they did not set out on the same day as that on which they saw the star, and it seems most likely that at least two days passed whilst Herod was questioning them and consulting with the scribes and priests. This makes it much more wonderful that they were able to come from Persia in so short time. But two circumstances lessen this wonder: (1) It is probable that they may have come, not from the furthest, but from the nearest parts of Persia, which are scarcely more than two hundred leagues from Jerusalem (2) That they may have travelled on camels, which, although loaded, are said to perform a journey of forty leagues a day. It is not necessary to adopt the opinion of Remigius, that the journey was performed by divine power.

Jerusalem.

It is strange that the wise men should have come to Jerusalem when they were led by the star to Bethlehem. Some think that the star disappeared near Jerusalem, that the Magi might relate that a King was born in the Royal City, lest the Jews should appear ignorant of what they had learnt from the testimony of the Gentiles. So S. Ambrose (lib. ii., *On S. Luke*, chap. ii.), S. Augustin (*Serms.* xxx., xxxi., xxxv., *de Temp.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* vii. *on S. Matt.*), S. Basil (*Hom. de Hum. Gen. Chti.*), Theophylact, and S. Bernard on this passage. This is the more probable because the people of Jerusalem did not see the star; for if they had, the Evangelist would not have passed it over in silence, and if it had not disappeared, all the city must have seen it. The Evangelist seems to signify this in verse 9—as if while they were at Jerusalem they had not seen the star, but as soon as they left the city, they began to see it again. S. Bernard thinks that the Magi desired to come to Jerusalem first, to ask about the new-born King, and therefore that the star hid itself that they who sought for human counsel might lose the divine guidance. Their coming to Jerusalem would appear to have been caused not so much by their desire for knowledge as by the will of God—partly that the Jews might be without excuse, as S. Jerome says: partly that Christ being born a King might be announced by the Gentiles before it was so by the Jews, lest the testimony of the Jews to their own King might appear matter of suspicion, as S. Basil suggests in his *Homily de Hum. Gen. Christi;* for human reason required that one who came to seek a new-born King should come to the Royal City.

Verse 2. *That is born.*

The assertion of the Magi is notable, for they did not ask, as men in doubt, whether He were born, but, like men

instructed by God, they asserted decidedly that He was so. They seem to speak as if all would affirm that He was so, and all knew it. Who, indeed, could suppose that men of Persia would know this, but that the Jews would be ignorant of it? It may be, too, that they inquired for a new King, of whom, when they knew nothing, they came to Jerusalem, to learn in the Royal City what they could not discover in other cities.

King of the Jews.

These words may be taken in two ways: either the King of the Jews who is born, or who is born King of the Jews. Either meaning is probable, but the second seems the better as being the more forcible; nor could the Magi be ignorant that Herod was not the lawful and natural King, but a factitious one given by the Romans. They place the natural King in opposition to the factitious one.

For we have seen His star.

The star being the index of His birth, five questions may be asked about this star:

1. Of what nature it was (*qualis fuerit*)?
2. When was it first seen (*quando*)?
3. Where (*ubi*)?
4. How did the Magi know by it that Christ was born (*quomodo*)?
5. Why were they taught by it rather than by any other means (*cur*)?

S. Gregory Nyss. thinks that it was one of the other stars, and that it came down to render the Magi obedience (*Hom. de Incarn.*). Almost all others suppose that it was not an actual star, but only had the appearance of one (S. Chrysostom, *On Matt.* vi.; S. Basil, *Hom. de Hum. Gen. Christi;* S. Ambrose, l. ii., *On S. Luke*; S. Augustin, *Serm.* xxx. *de Temp.;* Fulgentius, *Hom. de Epiph.;* author of work *De Mira-*

bil. Nat., ascribed to S. Augustin, iii. 4). They prove this by many arguments: (1) It was never seen before; (2) never after; (3) it was not in the heavens, or it could not have shown the way; (4) it travelled from east to west, contrarily to the natural course of stars; (5) it shone not only by night, but also by day; (6) it sometimes concealed itself, as has been said on verse 1; (7) it stood over the house where the Child was. All these are probable but not conclusive arguments; for He who at one time caused the sun to stand still, and at another to go back, could cause the star to leave its natural station and perform acts beyond its ordinary nature. But because God is not accustomed to work miracles without necessity, and as we ought not to receive them as miracles without proof, it is more credible that it was not a true star, though it could bear the resemblance of one, and it was sufficient for the Evangelist to give it that name from its resemblance to a real star and not because it really was one, as we call a comet a star.

What it was has caused much discussion among the learned. Some suppose it to have been the Holy Ghost, who, as He appeared after the baptism in the form of a dove, so now He descended in the appearance of a star to point out Christ. Others think that it was an angel who assumed the form of a star; for the angels are called stars (*Apoc.* i. 20). Many others suppose it to have been a comet. I have said that it was either a comet or an angel.

2. *When it appeared* is not so certain; some say that it was seen *two years* before Christ was born; they conclude this from the words "two years and under" (verse 16), as Euthymius says. The Author and Nicephorus (i. 13) think the same, as at one time did S. Augustin (*Serm.* xxxvi. *de Temp.*), though he afterwards altered his opinion. Others prefer to say one year. S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, and others, put the

appearance on the same day as that of Christ's birth (S. Augustin, *Serm.* iv. *de Epiph.*). This seems the most probable; for there is this force in the words, "We have seen His star in the east," that is, the star which shows us that He is born; and in the others, "Where is He who is born?" as if they certainly knew from the star, not that Christ was to be born, but that He actually was born. Why Herod slew the infants from two years and under shall be explained on verse 16.

3. Where the Magi saw the star is not certain; for the words are ambiguous, "We have seen His star in the east". The meaning may be either that when they were in the east they saw the star in the west, or that they saw the star which appeared in the east. Some think that the star appeared, not in the east, but in the west. But it does not seem doubtful that it first appeared in the east, and became the guide of their journey. For when they said, "We have seen His star in the east," they meant to describe not so much the place whence they came as the motive which induced them to come—namely, their having seen the star; the meaning, therefore, is that the star appeared in the east; for the question was, not whence they themselves were, but where they had seen it. For if it had appeared in the west, that is, in Judæa, it would have been seen by the Jews: a circumstance which the Evangelist could not have passed over in silence. Besides, although he does not say that the star went before the Magi the whole way, yet, as he says (verse 9) that it went before them after they went out of Jerusalem, until "it came and stood over where the Child was," we must believe that it had previously done the same thing as they journeyed from the east to the west.

4. How the Magi knew that Christ was born from the sight of the star is difficult to be explained. It is certain that no man by natural knowledge could ever discover that, not to say, God, but even man, was born. It remains, there-

fore, that the Magi knew it by revelation from God. But how or when this was made may be matter of question. S. Jerome (*On Isaiah* xix.) thinks it to have been done by the devils; and Origen (i., *Cont. Cels.*) seems to have been of the same opinion. Others consider the angels to have been the means employed; others, again, that it was the work of God by inward inspiration.

But it is the most prevalent opinion of almost all the Ancients that the Magi had long known from the prophecy of Balaam that a star should arise on the birth of Christ (*Numbers* xxiv. 7); and the Magi were either the descendants of Balaam or they received the tradition from such of them as were living in their neighbourhood (Origen, *Hom.* xiii. *in Numbers;* S. Ambrose, ii., *On S. Luke;* S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* i. *in Evangel.;* S. Epiphanius, *Epit.;* S. Basil, *Hom. de Hum. Gen. Chti.*). This, as well from the great number of witnesses in its favour as from its intrinsic probability, seems extremely likely. The Magi, when they said, "We have seen His star in the east," seem to speak of a thing that was known to the Jews, supposing that they could not be ignorant of a prophecy which they themselves, as Gentiles, knew. For they did not say, We have seen a star, but His star; speaking of that star, which, as all knew, would appear when Christ was born. It increases the probability of this that Herod believed that Christ would be shown by this star as a thing known to all the people; for he did not ask the chief priests whether a star should appear when Christ was born, but where Christ should be born.

The objection of some to that prophecy, that Balaam calls Christ Himself a star, when it had been said that a star should arise out of Jacob (*Levit.* xxiv. 17), cannot be denied. But it is common, especially in the Prophets, for the same word to signify both Christ Himself and the figure of Christ, as in verse 15. This at least appears certain,

that, either from this Prophet, or from some other source, the Magi had a divine revelation; for they say, persistently, and like men taught by God, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"

5. The last question is, Why did God teach the Magi by means of a star? It is not difficult to answer. S. Gregory says that God willed to instruct them in accordance with their own knowledge, that they who had passed their lives in the observation of the stars might learn Christ from the stars. In all things we can both seek and find God.

And are come to adore Him.

They who see nothing here but the worship of Urbanity seem to me themselves too urbane! For why did none but these Magi come with toil to worship any of the numerous kings of the Jews? as S. Athanasius asks in his book *De Incarnatione.* How would they worship one in a stable, and lying in a manger, if they thought Him nothing more than man? and how did Herod say that he also would come and worship Him? God would, in truth, to no purpose, have taught them by a great miracle to worship a man only, and not God also.

Verse 4. *And assembling together all the chief priests.*

It is clear from many places that there was only one chief priest (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 59, 61, 65; *S. Mark* i. 44; ii. 26; *S. Luke* xxii. 50, 54; *Acts* iv. 6; v. 17, 21, 27; ix. 1; xxii. 5; xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1). It may therefore be rightly asked how they are called chief priests, as if they were many? The same expression is found in other places also (*S. Matt.* xvi. 21; xx. 18, *et al.*). Some say that all who had once held the office of high priest were called chief priests; for the office had been annual and venal (*S. John* xi. 49; xviii. 13) from the time of Pompey's taking the city and bringing the office into his own power and that of the

Romans (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xviii. 6; Eusebius, *Hist.*, i. 6). So S. Chrysostom and Euthymius on chap. xxvi. 5, and Theophylact on *S. Mark* xiv. Their opinion is answered as follows: Even before the office was annual, and while it was still held for life, we read of many called chief priests (2 *Paralip.* xxxvi. 14). They were therefore one and many—one supreme, who was termed absolutely the chief priest or pontifex. There were many who were heads of priestly families, as in *Paralip.* xv. 6, 12; xxiv. 6. Herod therefore calls the priests because it was their duty to answer for the law (*Malach.* ii. 7); but he did not call all of them, because their number would have been infinite, but the chiefs, who were fewer and more learned, and of the number of the ordinary judges of the Sanhedrim, and in a manner councillors, as 1 *Paralip.* xxiii. 4; *S. Matt.* xxvi. 3; *S. Mark* xi. 18; *Acts* iv. 26, and many other places, where without the chief priests no council is assembled.

And the scribes of the people.

The scribes were properly the public notaries, whose duty it was not only to prepare public instruments, but also to keep the holy writings incorrupt, and to explain their meaning; as we learn from 4 *Kings* xxii. 8, 9, 10; 1 *Esdras* vii. 10, 11; *S. Matt.* vii. 29; xvii. 10, *et al.* They are called lawyers, therefore (*S. Luke* vii. 30; xi. 46), but they were not legislators, as some say. Their rank was high, as among the Greeks the grammarians were placed in the first order as knowing letters, that is, how to read and write. They corrected their authors and interpreted them, and were the judges in all questions of history, fables, the doubtful meaning of writers. They were therefore summoned by Herod, and also because they formed a great part of the council (*S. Mark* xiv. 53; xv. 1; *S. Luke* xxii. 66).

Verse 6. *And thou, Bethlehem.*

A difference, which at first sight appears great, between

the Evangelist and Prophet renders this passage one of difficulty. They appear to be at variance on four points:

1. The Evangelist says—"Thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda"; the Prophet—"Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata".

2. The Evangelist—"Art not the least"; the Prophet—"Thou art the least".

3. The Evangelist—"Out of thee shall come a Governor"; the Prophet does not name a Governor.

4. The Evangelist says—"Who shall rule (*regat*) or feed (ποιμανεῖ) my people". The Prophet says—"Who shall rule" (*dominetur*, מושל).

5. "The Evangelist," says S. Jerome, "seems in no way to agree either with the Prophet or the LXX."

Some reply, too readily, that the Evangelists, from lapse of memory, frequently cite passages of Scripture, not only in other words, but in a different and even contrary sense to that of the text. They cite S. Jerome, in his *Epistle to Pammachius*, as the author of this opinion. To say that the Evangelists ever quote Scripture in a contrary sense I hold to be blasphemous; nor does S. Jerome ever say this. The meaning of what he does say on this passage in the letter mentioned is opposite to that which these assert it to be. He does not say that the meaning of the passage in the Evangelist is contrary to that of the Prophet, but that the meaning of one word of the Evangelist compared with that in the Prophet, if considered *per se*, is contrary. For "thou art the least," and "thou art not the least," taken *per se*, are altogether contrary; but, as said by the Evangelist and Prophet, they are not contrary, but one and the same, as shall shortly be shown. But let those who ascribe a lapse of memory to the Evangelists, by whose mouths the Holy Ghost spoke, although they excuse it as a human failing, consider whether they do not excuse in the Evangelists that for which, if a man excused it in himself, they would think him an object of ridicule. It seems, too, to be

blasphemy, or very closely bordering upon it. S. Jerome was more careful; for he thought that the priests and scribes should be blamed rather than the Evangelist. He says, in his *Commentary on the Fifth Chapter of Micheas*, that the Evangelist intended to show not what the Prophet said, but what the priests and scribes answered, that he might show their ignorance of Scripture. But it can hardly be supposed that the priests, however ignorant, cited the words of the Prophet incorrectly, especially when it was probable that, in a question of so much weight, the book itself would be produced. The Evangelist seems, moreover, to have repeated their answer rather to praise than blame them, that he might show, even from the opinion of His enemies, that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. Some think that the Prophet is to be understood interrogatively, and that the words, "Art thou the least" and "Thou are not the least," have the same meaning; but this could not be received even if it could be proved. Others maintain that צעיר is put by the Prophet in the neuter gender, so that the sense may be: It is little that thou art among the thousands of Juda; that is: Thou art the greatest, that thou may be among the princes of Juda, as the Evangelist says: "Thou art by no means the least". It seems no objection to this view that the Hebrews do not generally use צעיר in this sense, but מעט as in *Gen.* xxx. 15; *Isa.* vii. 13. The explanation of the passage probably depends upon another point—whether they are the words of the priests and scribes, or of the Evangelist. Some commentators think them the words of the Evangelist. It is not easy to see how they explain the question, but the context and connection of the words seem to confute them. They are then, it may be thought, the words of the priests, faithfully repeated by the Evangelist. It appears that the Evangelist's intention was not to recite the words of the Prophet, but the inter-

pretation of the priests and scribes, which was something as follows: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata," that is, "the land of Juda". For this Bethlehem was formerly called Ephrata (*Gen.* xxxv. 16, 19; xlviii. 7). For there was another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulon (*Josh.* xix. 15; *Judges* xii. 8), which was not called Ephrata; and the Prophet added this epithet to distinguish it from the other. The priests wished to explain this by a name still more clear: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata"; that is, who art in the land of Juda, not Zabulon, to teach Herod that the meaning of the Prophet was that, not in the Bethlehem of Zabulon, but in the Bethlehem of Juda, Christ should be born; for Herod thought it of the greatest consequence to his interests that he should know this. The words that follow, "Thou art the least," they explain as if the Prophet had spoken ironically: "Thou seemest to be the least, if the circuit of thy walls be regarded; but thou art by no means the least, for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule My people". "Among the thousands" (*in millibus*, אלפים) they interpret "Among the princes" (*in ducibus*) that is, among leaders, or in the production of leaders; for the word אלפים signifies both leaders and a thousand: for leaders are mostly over a thousand men, hence they are called chiliarchs by the Greeks. For the people were divided into thousands, as everyone is aware, and as is plain from *Exod.* xviii. 25, and 1 *Paralip.* xxiii. 4. The same, as we have seen from Aristotle and Plato, was the order of the ancient Greek republic. It is certain that the Prophet not only looked forward to the future coming of Christ, but also alluded to the past of David, signifying that a small city had already produced one most eminent chief—David, and would shortly produce another far more excellent—Christ; and, as it was a question about the birth of Christ, the priests appositely rendered יהודה באלפי among the leaders of Juda מושל. Their substi-

tution of ποιμανεῖ (feeding) for *dominetur* (ruling) came from their wish to show His manner of ruling, signifying that Christ would not rule His people with an iron rod, like the Gentiles, but with the crook of a kind shepherd, whose sheep were his own. At the same time, they probably allude to David, the figure of Christ, who was brought from feeding his sheep to the feeding of the people of God, as in *Ps.* lxxviii. 70, 71, 72. Our version reads *reget*, more properly, perhaps, than *pascet;* for they did not call Christ ποιμένα, a shepherd, as Homer calls his kings, but ἡγέμονα (*ducem*). And the word "ruling" applies better to Him than "feeding". S. Chrysostom and The Author blame the priests because they did not give the full testimony of the Prophet. For there follows: "And His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity". But they seem to have been silent, not from malignity so much as from prudence, because the words had nothing to do with Herod's question of where Christ was born.

Verse 7. *Then Herod privately calling the wise men.*

He called them privately because he was preparing a snare for Christ.

What time the star.

The time when the star appeared, that is, when it first began to be seen by them.

Verse 10. *When they saw the star.*

They who conclude from these words that the star had not led the Magi the whole of their journey, because they now rejoiced at it as if rendering them a new service, do not appear to observe that in the same way it might be proved that it had never been seen before at all. When the Magi were at Jerusalem it disappeared, as has been said on verse 1. But they seem not to have understood

the force of the above words, for the Evangelist does not appear to mean that the Magi were rejoiced at the sight of the star, which seems to have vanished before, for if he meant this he would have said "before" and not "now". "And behold the star which they had seen in the east went before them, until it came and stood where the Child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" (verses 9, 10). He signifies that they were glad to see the star (as he had just said) standing over where the Child was. They rejoiced, not because they saw the star, which they had often seen before, but because they had found Christ, for whom they had been seeking.

Verse 11. *And when they were come into the house.*

A question has arisen, from the Magi being said to have entered a house and not the stable, as to whether or not they found Christ lying in the manger. Almost all the Ancients say that they found Him in the inn and worshipped Him (S. Just. Mart., *Cont. Tryph.;* S. Chrys., *Hom.* vii.; S. Aug., *Serms.* i., ii., *on Epiph.*). His having been placed in a stable was partly a mystery, and partly from necessity, because as all who were of the family of David came from all parts to Bethlehem, because of the taxing, there would not have been room in the inn (*S. Luke* ii. 7). The mystery was thus fulfilled.

With Mary His Mother.

That Joseph was not mentioned was perhaps by chance: or he might not have been in the house: or the omission of his name was by mystery, that the Magi might not suppose him to have been the father of Christ; for the shepherds are said to have found the Babe with Joseph and Mary (*S. Luke* ii. 16).

They offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In which the East abounds; yet the mystery, acknow-

ledged with one consent by all ancient authors, should by no means be left out of sight—that gold is given to kings, frankincense to God, myrrh to men. It seems a less mystery that a woman should have poured ointment on Christ, which, however, was an Eastern custom; yet Christ said it was done to signify His burial, of which the woman perhaps had no thought (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 12). Of this mystery we have not Christ Himself, indeed, as a witness, but all the ancient Fathers as authorities (S. Irenæus, i. 3, 10; S. Cyprian, *Serm. de Stell. et Mag.;* Origen, i., *Cont. Cels.;* S. Basil, *Hom. de Hum. Generat.;* S. Greg. Nyss., *De Nativ.;* S. Cyprian, i., *De Evang.;* S. Ambrose, i., *De Fid.;* S. Aug., *Serm.* i. *de Epiph.*, and *Serm.* xxxvii.; S. Jerome, *Comment.;* Juvencus and Sedulius in their poems).

Verse 14. *Who arose.*

Who arose, that is, when he awoke immediately after the vision, he took the Child and fled by night. It is probable that there were executioners at hand who were seeking for the Infant, as they were directed to depart in the night. They fled neither from Bethlehem nor from Jerusalem, but from Nazareth in Galilee, as is plain from *S. Luke* ii. 39. One reason why Egypt is named is clear: it was out of the jurisdiction of Herod. The Evangelist gives another: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Osee the Prophet—I call my Son out of Egypt" (x. 1), though the event rather than the reason is signified here. For Egypt was the refuge of the Isaelites. They were driven thither by famine, and, long after, when oppressed by the Chaldæans in war, the remnant betook themselves thither (4 *Kings* xxv. 26). Egypt seems to have been the school of the sons of God, who cannot flourish unless they are oppressed.

And was there until the death of Herod.

How long Christ remained in Egypt, or in what place

He lived, the Evangelist does not mention, and it cannot probably be known now.

It is the almost universal opinion of antiquity that Christ spent two years in Egypt. If we wish to ascertain what is most probable, three *principia* may be laid down which can easily be proved from the Gospel.

1. The flight into Egypt happened in the same year as the adoration of the Magi, and not long after it. Verse 16 shows this: "Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men"; and verse 13: "And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph". Although this does not prove that the departure of Joseph took place immediately after that of the Magi, yet it certainly shows that not long after it Joseph was warned to depart, and Herod sought to kill the Child.

2. Christ returned from Egypt in the same year as that of Herod's death. This is proved from verses 19, 20.

3. The Magi, as shown above, came a few days after the birth of Christ. From these three *principia*, although two others might be added from profane authors (viz., how many years Herod reigned, and in what year of his reign Christ was born), we shall certainly find sufficient time for Christ to have stayed in Egypt.

Of these two last *principia* one is certain, that Herod reigned thirty-seven years. We learn this from most credible sources (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, bk. i., xxi.; Eusebius, *Chron.*).

As regards the other, authors differ as to two years. Some say that Christ was born in the forty-first year of the Emperor Augustus (S. Iren., iii. 24; Tertull., *Adv. Jud.*); others in the forty-second (Euseb., *Hist.*, i. 5; Epiphan., *Her.*, li.). Again, it is further doubted, by another year, what year of Augustus fell on what of Herod.

Some, like Eusebius, think that the forty-first year of Augustus was the thirty-first of Herod; others—*e.g.*, S. Epiphanius, that it was the thirty-second.

If we follow S. Irenæus and Tertullian, and say that Christ was born in the forty-first year of Augustus, and Eusebius in saying that that was the thirty-first of Herod, Christ would necessarily have stayed six entire years in Egypt: or seven if we include the year of his flight, *i.e.*, the thirty-second of Herod. This is the first and, as appears, the most ancient opinion.

But if we follow S. Irenæus and Tertullian on the years of Augustus, and S. Epiphanius on those of Herod, there will remain five, or, if we include the first, six years, during which Christ was in Egypt, and as many, according to Eusebius, if we follow him alone on the years both of Augustus and Herod. But if we follow Eusebius on the years of Augustus, and Epiphanius on the years of Herod, Christ was in Egypt at most five years if we count the first year, and at least four if we do not count it.

So that it is alone certain that Christ spent not more than seven, and not less than four, years in Egypt. Hence the common opinion of two years, and that of Nicephorus of three has no probability, unless we say that the adoration of the Magi took place two years after Christ's birth. But we have refuted this opinion of verse 1.

In what city of Egypt Christ dwelt, or what He did there, is unknown. There are many accounts by authors of no name, of miracles done by Christ in Egypt. We have John the Evangelist, who teaches us that Christ wrought His first miracle in Cana of Galilee, by turning water into wine (ii. 11), and although this may be confined to what He did after His return from Egypt, it is much more probable that that which is spoken universally should be understood universally. This, however, need

not weaken our faith in authors of good repute who say that when Christ entered Egypt the idols fell down, as S. Jerome says without disapprobation, and which so many have repeated that it may appear to be a true tradition. Sozomen also (v. 20) relates a tradition that when Christ came to Hermopolis, a city of Egypt, a certain lofty tree inclined its head.

Verse 15. *That it might be fulfilled.*

The word "that," in this place, does not seem to me to signify the cause but the event, as S. Chrysostom and John Damasc. have observed in many parts of Scripture (as *infra*, verse 16; *S. John* ix. 39). For Christ did not fly into Egypt that the prophecy might thus be fulfilled, but when He had fled thither to escape from Herod, it was so that the prophecy should appear to be thus properly fulfilled. And as this expression very frequently occurs in Scripture, it shall be explained once for all. There are apparently four methods in which a prophecy may be fulfilled.

1. When the thing itself comes to pass in the proper and literal sense: as when S. Matthew says (i. 22) that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in Mary: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son" (vii. 14).

2. When the thing itself of which the Prophet is rightly understood to speak does not take place, but that which is signified by it, as 2 *Kings* vii. 14: "I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to me a Son," which, as is plain, was properly said to Solomon, yet is applied by S. Paul to Christ, whose figure Solomon was (*Heb.* i. 6), as if it were fulfilled in Him, and *Exod.* xii. 46: "Neither shall you break a bone thereof," is certainly understood of the Lamb; yet S. John (xix. 36) says that it was fulfilled in Christ, who was signified by the Lamb.

3. When neither that of which the prophecy is

properly understood takes place, nor that which is signified by it, but something that resembles it and is of the same nature, so that the prophecy may appear to be said not less aptly of it than of that of which it was spoken. For the words, "This people with their lips glorify Me" (*Isa.* xxix. 13), were spoken by God of the Jews of the time of Isaiah, but Christ shows that they were fulfilled by those of His own time (*S. Matt.* xiii. 14; *Acts* xxviii. 26).

4. When precisely the same thing which had been spoken by prophecy or in Scripture, although it had already taken place, is fulfilled more and more, Scripture is then said to be fulfilled: that is, what was spoken by it is done most cumulatively. We may observe, also, that it often happens in Scripture that a thing is spoken of which has not merely begun to be done, but which is being done more and more, as in *S. John* xi. 12. The disciples, when they saw the miracle of the water turned into wine, believed more and more, for they had certainly believed before, as, *Deo volente*, we will explain that most difficult passage of the book of S. James (ii. 23.)

That prophecy of Osee, then, "Out of Egypt," &c., was properly understood of the people of Israel when God called His first-born Son (*Exodus* iv. 22), as is clear from the words of the Prophet. But it is said now to have been fulfilled in a second and third manner. For that people was banished into Egypt, and could thus be called a figure of Christ, who was to be banished to the same place: as now the mystical body of the Church is a figure of the natural body of Christ, and Christ resembles the people in each being called the Son of God. But the Evangelist signifies that the prophecy could not be properly and perfectly fulfilled in the people, as they were not properly and by nature the Son of God; but in Christ, who was such in both senses, it was fulfilled most perfectly. As if we

should say that the words, "I will be to thee a Father," were not properly spoken of Solomon, who was not properly and by nature a son; but of Christ, who was such in both senses, they were properly said. For "I call my son out of Egypt" (*Osee* xi. 1), the LXX. reads "his sons," either because for בני "my son," they read בניו "his sons," by the addition of one letter, or because they thought the meaning more applicable, as, indeed, it would have been had not the Evangelist read "my son". Julian, therefore, ignorantly objected this passage to the Christians, as if the Evangelist had cited the testimony of the Prophet in bad faith, not observing that he followed not the Greek LXX. version, but the Hebrew text of the Prophet (S. Jerome, *On Osee* xi.).

Verse 16. *Then Herod.*

The word "then" does not seem in this passage to refer *to a point of time*, as if Herod slew the children immediately on the departure of the Magi. Some distance of time must necessarily have elapsed between the two events, both because Christ was presented in the Temple on the twenty-second day after the Adoration, for He stayed in Nazareth some time after (*S. Luke* ii. 39); and because it is probable that Herod, although a bloodthirsty and cruel tyrant, tried first to find Christ, that he might kill Him alone, before putting to death all the other infants; a thing that, as he knew, he could not do without incurring the utmost hatred of the people; especially as we know, from Josephus, that he was accustomed by every means in his power to hunt after their favour, lest he should be deprived of the throne as a stranger. When, therefore, he sought for Christ, but could not find Him, that one child might not escape, he slaughtered all, which he could not have done without the lapse of time.

Sent forth.

A Hebraism נישלח. The Hebrews use the word שלח

and the Greeks *ἀποστέλλειν*, absolutely—the person concerned not being expressed, but understood, which the Latins seldom or never do—Understand executioners as in chap. xiv. 10; xxvii. 19; *Psalm* lvi. 4; civ. 19; *S. Mark* iii. 31; vi. 17.

From two years old and under.

This passage, from the difficulty of the history and the difference of opinions, is obscure. Some say that the Magi came two years after the birth of Christ, and that this was the reason of Herod's killing the children of two years. Others say one year or thereabouts after it. This would very easily solve the difficulty; but these opinions have been proved erroneous (verses 1, 2). Others say that Herod did not kill the infants immediately on the departure of the Magi, but two years afterwards—he having meanwhile been summoned to Rome to account for having put his sons to death. But this is also confuted, both by the words of the Evangelist, who does not allow so long a time, and by history. For it appears from the *Chronicon* of Eusebius that he had put his sons to death five years before. We who believe that the star did not appear before the birth of Christ, and that the Magi did not arrive many days after it, cannot adopt these explanations. The opinion of Strabus and Euthymius, with which also many of the learned of our time agree, seems very probable, that Herod added two years to the time of which he inquired of the Magi; and hence the words, "According to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men," do not mean that all the infants were slain who were born two years after the star had appeared to the Magi, but those who were born two years before it appeared. It may be asked, Why two years before, and not two years after? The answer may be: (1) Because there were not two years after, but only a few days, as shown on verses 1, 2; (2) because the Magi, as has been said on verse 2, said, not that Christ would be

born, but that He actually was born, but *how long* He had been born they did not say, and possibly did not know. For the star showed that He actually *was* born, not *when* He was born. Herod then sought, for caution and security to himself, to put to death all who had been born two years before the star appeared; and he slew not only those in Bethlehem, where the priests had said that Christ would be born, but also all who were born in all the adjacent country; and he thus extended his cruelty not only in place, but also in time, beyond what was necessary. That he might not accidentally err, he augmented his error.

Verse 17. *Then was fulfilled.*

This prophecy was now fulfilled in the same manner as that of *Jeremiah* xxx. 1.

Verse 18. *A voice in Rama was heard.*

The Hebrews explain 4 *Kings* xxiv. 10, xxv. 4, of the leading away captive of the two tribes Juda and Benjamin. Nor is it doubtful from the circumstances of Jeremiah that it ought so to be understood, and that by Rachel the whole territory of the two tribes is signified by a double metonymy; one, by which a place is understood by a person; the other, by which a whole country is understood by a single city. Rachel was buried in Bethlehem (*Genesis* xxxv. 19). Hence by Rachel, Bethlehem is to be understood. Why, then, did not the Prophet simply say, "Bethlehem weeping for her children," but spoke of Rachel, who had long been dead, when the dead do not lament? The reason may be that Rachel was a woman, and it is the nature of women to lament in calamities of this kind. I know not if the Prophet alludes to her birth; for she is said to have brought forth Benjamin with severe suffering (*Genesis* xxxv. 18), and mothers usually lament over those lost children the most whom they have brought forth with the most labour. But Rachel's weeping, who was now

dead, may be thought not only elegant, but also of great force and full of meaning. For, by this expression, the Prophet most probably wished to show that the future calamity of the people would be so great that not one woman would remain who could weep, so that the mourners must call up even the dead. We see something of the same kind in tragedies, when the manes of the dead or the shades of the cities that have been overthrown are introduced lamenting. But why, by the weeping of Rachel, is the calamity of the kingdom of Judæa signified, when Rachel was the mother, not of Juda, but Benjamin? (*Genesis* xxxv. 18). Because the head of the kingdom was Jerusalem, formerly called Jebus, which was in the tribe of Benjamin (*Joshua* xviii. 28; 1 *Paralip.* xi. 4).

What the Prophet, then, spoke of the captivity, S. Matthew applied to the slaughter of the infants, showing that the prophecy, though not spoken of them, could be applied to them much more properly than to the captive Jews, and because the former were men, and the latter infants; the former deserving punishment, the latter innocent and undeserving; the former captives, the latter cruelly slain; the former of Juda, the latter of Bethlehem. Rachel, therefore —that is, Bethlehem—should rather lament the infants than the men. A deep and profound grief is expressed by the accumulation of words—"lamentation, and mourning, and woe". Our version, indeed, expresses only two, and perhaps more rightly, because two only are found in the Prophet נהיבכי unless we say that the Evangelist followed the LXX., which has rendered the two Hebrew words by the three Greek ones, *θρῆνος καὶ κλαύθμος καὶ ὄδυρμος*, and by the addition of the word *great*, which in the Hebrew is ממבירים (bitter). The meaning, however, is the same, for in Latin we often say, to weep bitterly, that s, much.

No one denies that Rama was the name of a city, but

because it is neither in the tribe of Juda nor near Bethlehem, but in the tribe of Benjamin and near Gabaon (*Joshua* xviii. 25), the translators did not think that the Prophet could have spoken of it. It appears, however, that the Prophet did name that city, because it was not in the tribe of Juda, but in that of Benjamin ; for he wished to show that there would be a grief common to each tribe, because each would be taken captive. He therefore named one city of Juda, Bethlehem, and another of Benjamin, Rama. The Prophet named Rama rather than any other city because it was on the confines of Benjamin and Juda, and his intention was to show that the lamentation of Juda would be so great that it would be heard even in the tribe of Benjamin.

Because they are not.

Here also the Evangelist, or his Greek interpreter, followed not the original Hebrew, but the LXX. For the Prophet had said כי איננו "because he is not"; that is, because none of them had remained, but all were either slain or led into captivity. The LXX., however, because the Prophet had spoken of sons in the plural number, to obviate any difficulty, translated it also in the plural, "because they are not," as is done in many other passages. It is a Hebraism, showing that they who were before were wholly and suddenly dead, so as to seem to have instantaneously disappeared (*Gen.* v. 24), where it is said of Henoch that he was not ; that is, he was not seen any more because God took him (and *Ps.* xxxvi. 36, of the wicked). It is signified here, therefore, that the Jewish men were carried into Babylon, and the infants into Abraham's bosom.

All ancient writers, with wonderful consent, make these infants true martyrs. For, although neither baptised, nor dying of their own will for Christ, they were baptised in their own blood ; and that which the faith of another does the perverse will of the tyrant, in putting them to death

for Christ, effected; and as much as Herod harmed them, his cruelty profited them. So say S. Irenæus, S. Justin Martyr, S. Cyprian, S. Chrysostom, and others.

Verse 19. *But when Herod was dead.*

Josephus (*Antiq.*, xvii. 8; *Bell. Jud.*, 21), Hegesippus (i. 45), Eusebius (i. 8), tell us of what death he died. Eusebius adds, that for the slaughter of the Innocents he was destroyed by a shameful disease.

Verse 20. *They are dead.*

This is by syllepsis, by which, when speaking of one person, the plural is used. Herod alone was dead, but many executioners, by his command, sought the young Child's life.

Verse 22. *But hearing that Archelaus reigned.*

Herod had nine wives. By two—one his cousin by the mother's side, the other his brother's daughter—he had no sons. By the others he had nine—Alexander, Aristobulus, Antipater, Herod, Antipas (who also afterwards took the name of Herod), Archelaus, another Herod, Philip, Phasellus; and three daughters—Roxane, Salome, and Olympias (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xvii. 1; xvii. 7; *Bell. Jud.*, i. 18). He strangled his two eldest sons in his lifetime (*Antiq.*, xvi. 17; *Bell. Jud.*, i. 17). He put Antipater to death five days before he died himself (*Antiq.*, xvii. 9). The others were dead. Three survived their father—Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip. Herod made two wills. In the first he named Antipas heir of his kingdom. In the second he suddenly changed his intention, and made Archelaus king of Judæa, Antipas tetrarch of Galilee and Petræa, Philip tetrarch of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, Batanæa, and the region of Paneas; but on the condition that Archelaus should not assume the name of king, and that nothing mentioned in his will should be carried into effect without the approba-

tion of Cæsar (Josephus, *Antiq.*. xvii. 10; *Bell. Jud.*, i. 21). Although Cæsar would not give Archelaus the name of king, he made him ethnarch of Judæa, Idumæa, and Samaria (*Antiq.* xvii. 1). Yet, as he practised kingly power, and as the soldiers immediately after his father's death saluted him as king (*Antiq.*, xvii. 10), he was commonly called king, and the Evangelist has here given him this title.

It may appear strange that Joseph should have been perplexed on hearing that Archelaus was reigning, and have therefore feared to go into Judæa, as he might, we should suppose, have thought that one of Herod's sons would succeed him in his kingdom. Joseph may have thought either that no one would succeed him, as he had possessed the kingdom by no kind of right, or that Antipas would do so, according to his father's first will, whom Joseph knew to be of a milder disposition. This might be one reason why he was directed by the angel to go into Galilee, where Antipas ruled, although there is another more certain. When there was a question about Christ as King of the Jews, more was to be feared from Archelaus, the king, than from Antipater, the tetrarch.

Verse 23. *That it might be fulfilled.*

This testimony is found in the same words in none of the sacred writers. This has given cause for various explanations. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* ix.), Theophylact, and Euthymius think that none of the Prophets' works now extant is cited, but some that have perished, such as Nathan's, Esdras', and others, whose writings S. Chrysostom, S. Athanasius in the *Synopsis*, and the thing itself, show to have perished. But it is difficult to believe that the Evangelist cited, and without apparent reason, prophecies which are not extant, although we find a lost prophecy of Enoch cited, under wholly different circumstances, by S. Jude. Some think

that the Evangelist is producing a testimony from Prophets whose writings were extant in his day, but which were not in the ecclesiastical canon. Others think that the Prophets are cited—that is, the interpreters of the Prophets, who have elicited this meaning from the canonical writers, although it is not expressly found in their books, viz., that Christ should be called a Nazarite (*Nazaræus*).

There were *three* divisions of Prophets:

1. The first, to whom the Holy Spirit was always present; as the Greater Prophets, as they are called.

2. The second, to whom the Spirit was not always present, but was so very frequently, like the Minor Prophets.

3. The third, who were called Prophets, not because they foretold future events, but because by the Spirit of God they interpreted the sayings of the Prophets. These are called the Sons of the Prophets in the Old Testament (3 *Kings* xx. 34; 4 *Kings* ii. 3, 5, 7; iv. 38; v. 1; ix. 1). In the New Testament they are also called Prophets (1 *Cor.* xii. 28; xiv. 29, 32, 37).

These authors, however, do not seem to prove that the Evangelist speaks of the third class of Prophets, whose testimony none of the Apostles has ever produced. Others, again, suppose the Book of Judges to be referred to, where it is said, "The Child shall be called a Nazarite (*Nazaræus*) from his birth". Although this was said of Samson, the Evangelist says that it was fulfilled in Christ, of whom Samson was a figure, like the other prophecies (verses 13, 14); and, therefore, that he did not say "by the Prophet," but "by the Prophets"; because that book was not written by one, but by many in succession, each after each.

Opposed to this explanation is the fact that Christ is not called נזיר *Nasiræus*, like Samson, but נצרי *Natzereus*, or *Natzareus*, as is seen from the title on the cross and the testimony of the ancient Hebrews.

Others still refer to *Isaiah* xi. 1. The Hebrew is נצר

germen, surculus, which is the source of the word נזיר *Natzaræus*. S. Jerome and The Author think this probable.

Others think that no single testimony of any one Prophet is produced, but one from all the Prophets, for all the Prophets called Christ "Holy," nay, "Most Holy" (*Daniel* ix. 14), because the word נזרי *Nazaræus*, means separated, consecrated to God. S. Jerome seems to agree to this. I for my own part, if my opinion be of any value, think that the Evangelist desired to change the odium of the word into honour, and whence Christ was derided, to prove that He was indeed the true Messiah. Christ was called by the Jews, in contempt, a Nazarene, and we know that all Christians were known to the Gentiles by the same term of contempt, as they are termed נצרים by the Jews to this day; and this has been one great hindrance to many to confess Christ to be the Messiah. "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" (*S. John* i. 46; vii. 41, 42). And again (verse 52), "Search the Scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not". The Evangelist would have taught us that this ought not to be any hindrance to us in confessing Christ to be the Messiah. For although Scripture does not say that He would not come from Nazareth of Galilee, but from Bethlehem of Juda, yet Christ was not called a Nazarene because He was born in Nazareth, but because He lived in it. For He was born in Bethlehem Juda. The name *Nazaræus* is rather a proof that He was the Christ, for Isaiah calls Him נצר that is, *Nazaræus*, a Nazarene.

There are three objections, however, to this view.

1. Christ is called in one sense נצר *germen* or *flos*, by the Prophet. He is called in another by the Jews נצריו *Nazaræus*, from the city Nazareth. The Evangelist was not ignorant of this, but was content to teach us that the very name which was given to Christ by the Jews in contempt had been ascribed to Him by the Prophet as an

honour. He thus retorted their calumny upon themselves.

2. Nazareth was not written with צ but with ז; that is, it was not written with *s* but *z*. But נזר that is, *Nazaræus*, was written by Isaiah with *s* נצר. But—

(i.) The Greeks could easily change *s* into *z*.

(ii.) The name of the city is not found written in the Old Testament, that we might judge by what letters it would have been written.

(iii.) Lastly, from the title on the Cross, and from the writings of the Hebrews, it is clear that the city was called by the Jews נצרית *Natsareth*, as Christ derived from it it the name of נצרי *Natsaræus;* but the Greeks and Latins softened the sound of the word to Nazareth and Nazarene.

3. The Evangelist does not say that it was said by the Prophet, but by the Prophets, as if, as S. Jerome says, it were certain that he was not bringing a testimony from the Scriptures. It was nothing new that when the testimony of one Prophet only was produced, it should be said to have been written by the Prophets. Of this we have instances in this same Gospel (xxvi. 56), and *S. John* (vi. 45), and *Acts* (xiii. 40; xv. 15). We have, indeed, seen a similar syllepsis in verse 20 just preceding, where it is said, "They who sought the life of the Child are dead," when, in fact, it was Herod alone who had died.

CHAPTER III.

THE PREACHING OF JOHN—CHRIST IS BAPTISED.

Verse 1. *In those days.*

THE whole twenty-three years and more which Christ is believed to have spent in Nazareth until He approached His thirtieth year, the age of a doctor of the Church, have been passed over by the three Evangelists, SS. Matthew, Mark, and John, in almost total silence. S. Luke alone has told us a little of His childhood (ii. 40 ff.).

In those days.

This was clearly thirty years later, or thereabouts, as is gathered from S. Luke (iii. 1), who says that the coming of S. John Baptist took place in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar. It is certain that Christ was born in the forty-first or forty-second year of the reign of Augustus (*vide* chap. i. 13). Augustus reigned fifty-six years. We may therefore ask why S. Matthew says "in those days"? A day is clearly put in Hebrew for a year (*Gen.* xxiv. 55; *Exod.* xiii. 10; *Levit.* xxv. 29; *Judges* xix. 2; 1 *Kings* i. 13; *Amos* iv. 4); also for any time, however long (*Judges* xviii. 1; *Ezekiel* xxxvii. 17). These words, therefore, mean the same as after some years, or after some time, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* x.) and Strabus show. Or, more probably, the time referred to is that which Christ spent in Nazareth. The words of the Evangelist thus cohere best. For he had said (ii. 23): "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth,"

and then he added: "In those days"; that is, while He was living there.

Came.

Why did He not come before? Because He was not yet thirty years old, before which age no one could perform the work of a priest, doctor of the Church, or prophet, as the Jews say, and as is clear from Scripture (1 *Paralip.* xxiii. 3). This was the reason why Christ Himself did not begin to teach before His thirtieth year. The Evangelist does not say that S. John then first came into the desert, but then first showed himself in it, and began to preach repentance.

In the desert of Judæa.

We read of many deserts in Scripture. The desert of Ziph (1 *Kings* xxiii. 15), between the west and south, a long way from Jerusalem; the desert of Maon near it (1 *Kings* xxiii. 24), Engeddi (xxiv. 2), Pharan (xxv. 1), Edom to the south (4 *Kings* iii. 8). But when a desert is mentioned absolutely, that of Juda is meant (*S. Matt.* iv. 1; xi. 7; xv. 23; *S. Mark* i. 3, 4, 12, 13; *S. Luke* i. 80, iii. 2), unless another is evidently intended, as in *S. John* iii. 14. S. Matthew adds the word Juda that it might be distinguished from others. It lay between the east and north on this side of Jordan; at the top, on the north and east point, were Enon and Salim, where John baptised.

Verse 2. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Some think that the kingdom of heaven here means grace, faith, and renewal of spirit, which is said to be within us, as in *S. Luke* xvii. 21. It may be so, but in this passage it would rather appear that heaven itself is intended, as in *S. Matt.* xxv. 34; *S. Luke* xiii. 28, 29; xxiii. 41. It seems to be a tacit allusion and antithesis to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and their return from Babylon into the land of Canaan, which had been promised them, and which no doubt was a figure of heaven.

The meaning, then, is: Prepare yourselves by penitence; that is, do not serve Pharoah and the king of Babylon, who are as Satan. In other words, do not prefer slavery to freedom, captivity to a kingdom, as some idle and degenerate Israelites formerly did. For the time is at hand when they who wish may enter heaven. Joshua speaks in the same manner to the people when they entered the land of Canaan, after their long wanderings (iii. 5). The kingdom of heaven is said to be at hand because, although shut before, it was to be opened after the death of Christ (*Heb.* ix. 8; xi. 29, 40). Christ Himself also teaches this; for what is the meaning of *S. Matt.* xxvi. 29, and *S. Luke* xxii. 18, but that He, by His death, would open the kingdom of heaven? The thief on the cross understood this (*S. Luke* xxiii. 42). The Cross of Christ was the ark of the covenant, by which the waters of Jordan were divided, and entrance was made to the promised land (*Joshua* iii. 16).

Verse 3. *This is he.*

Euthymius thinks these the words of S. John. But it is clear from *S. Mark* i. 1, and *S. Luke* iii. 4, that they are those of the Evangelist, who applied, as he often does, the words of the Prophet (*Isaiah* xl. 3) to S. John. "The voice of one crying" (*vox clamans*); or, in Hebrew, קול קורא for the Hebrew is ambiguous. Not only do S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke apply this testimony to S. John, but he himself also declares that he was the voice (*S. John* i. 23). The words of Isaiah, "preparing the way in the wilderness," were spoken of the souls of the Jews, which, as undisciplined and stony, they were exhorted to soften, and so prepare by humility, faith, and patience, that Christ might pass through them—*per eos transeat*—and receive them with Himself in heaven.

Verse 4. *The same John had his raiment of camel's hair.*

S. Luke describes the appearance of S. John with great

exactness, partly, perhaps, in praise of his sanctity, and partly to show tacitly why he raised so high an opinion of himself that the people flocked from all parts to see him.

His meat was locusts.

The locusts of S. John were the insect locusts which were allowed to be eaten by the Law (*Levit.* xi. 22). Almost all the ancient writers state that S. John's diet consisted of them. (Origen, *Hom. in Luc.;* S. Hilary, *Can.* ii.; S. Ambrose, *in Luc.* ii. 3; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* ii. *in Marc.;* The Author, *Hom.* iii.; S. Augustine, *Confess.*, iii. 31.)

Wild honey.

The land was described as flowing with milk and honey (*Exod.* iii. 8, 17; xiii. 5; *Levit.* xx. 24; *Numb.* xiii. 28; xiv. 8; *Deut.* vi. 2, *et al.*).

Verse 6. *And were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

Although the Catholic Doctors of the Church do not prove the doctrine of Confession from this passage, they affirm that they who came to John's baptism did not merely confess themselves generally to be sinners—for who does not confess himself to be a sinner?—but that each declared his own specific sin that he might receive pardon; for this is to confess sins. The Evangelists relate this not as a customary thing which was done by all who confessed themselves to be sinners, but as something new, singular, and admirable; for it was both new and admirable that arrogant men should not only confess themselves to be sinners, but guilty of such and such sins.

Verse 7. *And seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

These were two classes of men of very great favour and authority among the Jews. Christ, we find, had contentions with them, as also with the scribes (chap. v. 20; xvi. 11,

et al.). We find no mention of them in the Old Testament, for they were not men of office and authority like the priests and scribes, but of a heresy not much before the time of Christ, as we learn from Josephus, who describes these among the other Jewish sects (*Antiq.*, xiii. 9, 23; xvii. 1; xviii. 2; *De Bell. Jud.*, i. 17; and S. Epiphanius, *Panar.*, lib. i.). Some think that they were called Pharisees, as being always before the eyes of the people, because they enlarged their phylacteries (*S. Matthew* xxiii. 5) and loved salutations in the market places (v. 7; *S. Luke* xx. 46); for שרם means to expose, unroll, unfold. Others derive the word from פורשים את תורה "explaining the Law"; this they conclude from Josephus, who says that they were great expositors of the Law. A better authority is found in *Ben Gorion*, iv. 6. The derivation shows that they are in error; for they are not termed in Hebrew פרשום *expositores*, but פורשים *expositi*, or separated. I therefore rather follow the Hebrews, who, as Baal Haruch says, teach that the Pharisees were so called as being separated from other men through their remarkable learning and holiness; for this is the meaning of פרש like Nazaræi of old, who were called from נזר that is, to separate. By the Latins also they who are in any respect remarkable and noble are called *egregii*, *eximii*, "*singulares*". S. Epiphanius (*Her.*, xiv.) and S. Jerome (*Comment. on S. Matthew*, xxiii.) think that the Sadducees were so called from צדק justice—as being just men. The Pharisees had the office and authority of public teachers, which was confirmed by the testimony of Christ Himself (*S. Matthew* xxiii. 2). The scribes are always put before the Pharisees, perhaps because they were more ancient and of divine institution. For the Pharisees were of human origin alone.

The Jews themselves considered the Sadducees as heretics. They believed neither the Resurrection, nor the immortality of the soul, nor spirit, nor anything but what

they could apprehend by their senses or mere reason (*S. Mark* xii. 18; *Acts* v. 17; xxiii. 8). They admitted no unwritten traditions, and of the sacred writings they received what they would and rejected what they would. They only, therefore, received the Pentateuch as inspired by God; the other books they said were of men, and liable to error. This is thought to have been the reason why Christ, when disputing with them on the Resurrection, urged them only with citations from the Pentateuch, when there are others more plain (*Matt.* xxii. 31, 32). Such as the Pharisees and Sadducees were, however, it is strange that they should have received such harsh treatment from S. John as to be called a generation of vipers (Origen). S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others say that S. John knew that they came not with a true, but with a false and pretended repentance. He adds, therefore, "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance". As if he had said, Show by your actions that you do not come here with dissimulation, but in sincerity.

Why did they come if they came hypocritically? Origen (tom. vi., *On S. John*) replies: because they would not be thought wicked and heretics by the people whose opinion of John was so exalted. This is confirmed by xxi. 26, where they did not venture to say that the baptism of John was of men, because they feared the people; "for all held John as a prophet".

Generation of vipers.

S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke*, ii. 3) thinks this not so much blame as praise; as if he praised them because when they were the sons of vipers they did not follow their parents, but came to repentance. But both from the words and manner of speaking, and from the same expression having been used by Christ (xxiii. 33), not in praise, but blame, we may see that S. John speaks here in the same sense, and most severely; for ילדי האפעים "sons of vipers," that is,

vipers, is a Hebraism ; for as children most frequently resemble their parents, he calls them sons of vipers, to call them vipers themselves. And Christ said, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers" (*S. Matt.* xxiii. 32). Vipers are known as the most venomous of beasts, so that when S. Paul was bitten by one, and did not immediately swell out and die, the people thought him a god. John compares the excessive malice of the Pharisees and Sadducees to the most noxious of animals, especially the calumniating and backbiting of the saints, which is as proper and peculiar to the Pharisees and Sadducees as venom to the viper, as is explained by S. Jerome (*On Isaiah* xxx.) and S. Gregory (*Hom.* xx. *on the Gospels*).

Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Who taught you to come hither to flee from the wrath to come? you who are vipers rather than men. As if S. John had said, as SS. Chrysostom and Ambrose explain it: This is not of yourselves, but of divine grace and providence; or, Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come but your own consciences, which inwardly condemn you and compel you to seek a remedy? For who can teach you who teach all men, and are yourselves taught by none? as God said to Adam, "Who hath told thee that thou wast naked?" Some Latin copies read, "Who will show you?" This reading, if it were supported by the Greek, would please me greatly, as the meaning is better. "The soldiers and the publicans and the multitude have sought of me the way of salvation, and I have shown it to them; but who can show it to hypocrites like you, who seek it with feigning? No one. For who that conceals his disease can be healed by the physician?" Like Christ, S. John uses the words, "Flee from the wrath to come". We should allow no rash corrections of the text, yet ὑπέδειξεν, "who hath shown," may be easily read or written for ὑποδείξει, "shall show".

From the wrath to come.

It cannot be doubted that S. John calls future damnation the wrath to come, both because he opposes it to salvation and the kingdom of heaven, which he said was at hand, and because what S. Matthew here calls the wrath to come, Christ (xxiii. 33) calls the judgment of Gehenna.

Verse 8. *Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance.*

The Greek is *κάρπον ἄξιον τῆς μετανόιας*, that is, "show that you come hither not hypocritically". By fruits of penance S. John meant all outward signs by which true penitence of the heart may be discovered, such as tears, detestation of past sins, good works opposed to former ones.

Verse 9. *And think not to say within yourselves.*

It is more easy to explain the meaning than the words of this sentence. The meaning clearly is: Be not content and secure because you are the sons of Abraham, as if that were sufficient for your salvation. You have need of acts, and if you are the sons of Abraham do the works of Abraham (*S. John* viii. 39). But the words of the Greek are obscure—*μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*, meaning either "think not" or "you seem not to say". It is an unusual expression, and appears *sumptum de medio*, like *S. Luke* iii. 8: "Do not begin to say". This is as if S. John had said, "Cease to say". We must believe that S. Matthew meant to say the same here, in other words: "Do not appear to say," that is, "Do not show yourselves to be saying, We are the sons of Abraham. Do not show yourselves contented because you can call yourselves such. Do not rest in a name, but show forth works worthy of it. If you are the sons of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." These three last words seem to have this force, and to be used by the Evangelist with great choice of selection—"to seem," "to say"—each word is opposed to truth—and "in yourselves". That is, "You teach that you are the sons of Abraham, not

in deeds and acts, but in opinion and words". S. Paul appears to use the word δοκεῖν, *existimetur*, "should be thought," in the same sense (*Hebrews* iv. 1).

God is able of these stones.

S. John means actual stones, from which God was not less able to raise up sons to Abraham than He was to create Adam out of the earth, and Eve out of the side of Adam, Isaac the son of Abraham out of the womb of Sarah, which had been long dead. The Evangelist appears to allude to this. At the same time he looks to the calling of the Gentiles, from whom, as from shapeless and unpolished stones, God would create sons to Abraham: that is, faithful men, as S. Jerome and the Ancients explain it. Nothing differs more from life and reason than a stone; nothing is more difficult than to make men, or anything like men, out of stones. S. John took, therefore, as an example, a thing of all most difficult, to teach that with God nothing is difficult (as chap. iv. 3; *S. Luke* xvii. 40; *Deut.* xxxii. 13). What Remigius says, that John with these words pointed to the stones which the Israelites, when crossing the Jordan, erected as an everlasting monument (*Josh.* iv. 7), is not necessary to be believed, and too much confines the sense. The expression to raise up sons is a Hebraism, and means more than to beget: that is, to beget where it did not seem possible. Thus a living brother was said to raise up seed to his dead brother, which the latter was said, in a manner, to beget (*Genesis* xxviii. 8; *Deut.* xxv. 5, 6; *Ruth* iv. 10).

Verse 10. *Now is the axe laid to the root of the tree.*

There are *five* words translated here, and therefore the meaning is difficult—axe, root, tree, cut down, cast into the fire. It is clear that the "tree" means a man, as in xii. 33; *S. Luke* xxiii. 6. What the other words signify is not so clear. Some explain the "axe" as the word of God and

the power of the Gospel, and the "root" the faith of each (S. Irenæus, v. 15; S. Jerome, *In Comment.*). Others think death to be the axe, and life the root (S. Athanasius, *Quæst.* xliii., and others, mentioned by Euthymius). Others again say that Christ is the axe, as S. Gregory (*Hom.* xx. *in Evang.*). The meaning seems easy. S. John calls the divine judgment the axe, because it cuts everything to the quick, as appears, *ex circumstantiis*, chap. iii. 10. This, then, and the great final sentence, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," is called the axe. The trees are the Jews, for it is spoken of them. Abraham is the root from which, like divers trees, all the Jews were propagated. John, then, shows that they ought not to be content because they were the sons of Abraham, nor to trust in that root which was shortly to be plucked up. Let them trust in Christ, and in those good works which could not be destroyed. These points agree well with the text, and in this sense, for the most part, SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, and Theophylact understand them. But it seems difficult to see how we are to understand that Abraham was to be cut off. John does not say that the root itself was to be cut off, but the tree which does not bring forth good fruit. Why, then, is the axe laid at the foot of the tree? Not that the root itself, but that the trees from the root were to be cut down. In this sense the root also would be cut down. For the Jews are said to be cut off from Abraham as their root, when they are declared by divine sentence not to be the true sons of Abraham, because they do not follow his faith and works (*Romans* ix. 7, 8; *Galat.* iv. 28). Why, also, is the axe said to be put to the root of the tree now, as if it had not been so before? For even before this time, they who did not imitate the faith and works of Abraham were cut off, not less than now. Dathan and Abiram show this (*Numbers* xvi. 31), as also the many thousands in the wilderness (*Numbers* xxvi. 65; 1 *Cor.* x. 10). They are said to be

cut off now and not before, because the Jews took pleasure before in being the sons of Abraham according to the flesh; because, too, the law was given to them which was not given to the other nations, and they could be saved more easily by the law than without the law (*Romans* iii. 1, 2). But after the coming of Christ, it availed them not at all, because the Gospel was not preached more to them than to the other nations. "For all the Prophets and the law prophesied until John," but after John, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away"; so that if they do not follow Abraham they will be cut off from the root and cast into the fire; that is, that no more than the other nations will they be judged to be the sons of Abraham. The Gentiles are not said to be cut off, because they never were in the root: that is, they never were the sons of Abraham.

Verse 11. *I indeed baptise you in water.*

I indeed, who am only a man, baptise you only with water, and merely wash your bodies.

Unto penance.

That you may bring forth penance, and be ready to receive Him who is to come after me. My baptism warns you that as water cleanses the body, so you should be careful to wash your souls from the stains of sin.

But He that shall come after me.

He that shall come after me means one who is already born, and whose coming is at hand—that is, Christ.

Is mightier than I.

Is more powerful, and of greater virtue, so that I am not worthy to loose His shoe—that is, to do Him even the very lowest service. The other Evangelists express the same thing in other words (*S. Mark* i. 7; *S. Luke* iii. 16; *S. John* i. 26, 27). It is a Hebrew phrase from the custom

of persons who enter holy places taking off their shoes (*Exod.* iii. 5 ; *Joshua* v. 15). Such as were of higher rank had slaves to carry their shoes when they had taken them off. To this S. Matthew alludes. In hot countries shoes consist only of the lower soles, which are fastened above, and must be unbound before they can be taken off. They are called in Greek *ὑποδήματα*, and in Latin *crepidæ*. He is greater and stronger than I, because He is not man only, but God also, and He would baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire—that is, He would cleanse not your bodies alone, as I do, but your souls also—pouring out upon them the Holy Ghost, and kindling them with fire from heaven. Some modern heretics, among other perversions of Scripture, have said that John instituted the Sacrament of Baptism, and that his differed in no respect from Christ's, except that it was given by a different hand. Each was of water ; each of God ; each to repentance ; each for remission of sins ; each in the name of Christ ; each required the same confession of faith ; each was delivered by the same doctrine ; nor would Christ receive any other baptism from John than His own. They who think that the baptism of John and of Christ were the same seem to have understood neither the words of John, nor why he spoke them ; for why should he have mentioned the baptism of Christ, except that from the different condition of that to his own he might prove the different condition of Christ to himself. The Jews thought that when Christ came He would baptise (*S. John* i. 25). They saw that John baptised, and they began to doubt whether he were not the Christ. They therefore sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who art thou?" and when they disputed with him on baptism (*S. John* i. 19, 25 ; *S. Luke* iii. 15, 16), he proved from the effects of his baptism that he was not Christ, because he only baptised with water, but Christ would baptise with the Holy Ghost. He only cleansed

their bodies, Christ would cleanse their souls. But these heretics say, "John did not speak of the baptism of Christ by water, but of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost". Yet they cannot deny that he also spoke of the baptism of Christ by water, of which Christ Himself said: "Except a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost" (*S. John* iii. 5). Their denial that baptism is treated of at all in this passage is so senseless as to need no refutation. The baptism of Christ consists of water and the Holy Spirit, as man consists of body and soul. The baptism of John was of water alone, and, as he himself said, did not confer the Holy Ghost. It is not, therefore, the same. Moreover, when John said, "He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and fire," it is clear from *S. John* iii. 5 that His baptism did not consist of water alone, but of the Holy Ghost and fire; and, therefore, when John says, on the other hand, "I baptise you with water," the word "only" must be understood. If so, he makes his own baptism far inferior to that of Christ. The words, "He is mightier than I," have this force; for why does he call Christ mightier rather than better, more holy, greater, except that he desired to show that he could not do by his own baptism what Christ would do by His? Besides, John said that he baptised to repentance (*S. Mark* i. 4; *S. Luke* iii. 3; *Acts* xix. 4), and it is called the baptism of repentance, which Christ's never is. Again, the baptism of John was not conferred on repentance now brought forth, but that it might be brought forth. The baptism of Christ was not that it might be, but as it was now actually brought forth. John is not said to preach repentance and baptism, but baptism and repentance, or, which is the same thing, the baptism of repentance; because baptism preceded, repentance followed. For S. Peter does not say of the baptism of Christ, "Be baptised and repent," but "Repent and be baptised" (*Acts* ii. 38); because baptism followed, repentance preceded. It

was not, therefore, the same baptism. What can be clearer? For they who had received the baptism of John were commanded to be baptised again by S. Paul (*Acts* xxix. 15).

And fire.

It is beyond doubt that by fire is meant the Holy Ghost; for the word "and" here is not conjunctive but explicative. The explanation is added to show that it is not the communication of any holy spirit whatever that is meant, but that most notable One which was made by fire on the day of Pentecost. A proof of this is the fact that when Christ spoke of the baptism of water only (*S. John* iii. 5) He did not add this explanation.

Verse 13. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan.*

Why Christ pleased to be baptised by John, the Lord by the servant, is explained in verse 15: "to fulfil all justice". The Ancients add other very probable reasons:

1. That testimony might thus be given to Him from heaven, as says S. Jerome. For this reason, chiefly, John was commanded to baptise, that he might show Christ to the multitudes who came together from every part.

2. That Christ might give authority to John's baptism.

3. That He might thus allure more to His baptism, and that men might not think it a grievous thing, as S. Augustin says, to come to the baptism of the Lord when He, the Lord Himself, did not think it so to come to the baptism of His servant.

4. That by touching the water He might sanctify it to baptism (S. Epiphanius, *Anchor.*).

We might add that Christ wished, before He began to teach, to be in a manner initiated, and, if it may be said, when about to teach that He was Christ, to be made a Christian, if in any manner the baptism of John could make Him such, because it showed the way to Christ. It

is certain that he received baptism from no necessity of bringing forth repentance, who had done no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile; but rather that, when about to carry our sins into the desert, like the scapegoat of old, He might in the baptism of repentance put on the person of a sinner.

Verse 14. *But John stayed Him.*

John stayed Him, because he knew that He did not need baptism, and because, if not needing it, He wished to be baptised, John knew that he himself was not worthy to baptise Him. This is the meaning of his words: "I ought to be baptised by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" From this it is plain that John knew Christ, and who He was. This is more clear from *S. John* i. 29, 30. Hence arises the question how the same John said (verse 33): "I knew Him not". S. Augustin says that John knew before that He was Christ, but not that He would reserve to Himself the power of baptising with fire, until he saw the Spirit descending on Him. But he had said: "He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and fire". So that S. Chrysostom, in his *Sixteenth Homily on S. John*, Euthymius, and Theophylact, on *S. John* i. 33, say, with more correctness probably, that John, from the time when he leaped in his mother's womb, always knew Him to be the Saviour, and God, and all that He was, but did not know His person before He came to baptism; for Christ had passed His whole life in Egypt and Nazareth, and he himself in the desert. But, as soon as he saw Him, he knew by divine inspiration that He was the one whom he had known when born, and whom he foretold as to come after him, and baptise with the Spirit and fire. So, says Rupertus, Samuel knew that among the sons of Jesse there was one who was to be anointed king of Israel, when as yet he knew the faces of none of them; but as soon as he saw David, he knew him by inspiration

(1 *Sam.* xvi. 12). Their opinion cannot be received who say, in apparent opposition to the words of the Evangelist, that the dove came down upon Christ before He was baptised. Or why was it said to John: "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, He it is"? S. Hilary says, indeed (*De Trin.*, vi.), that that was not said to John on his own account, but because of the bystanders; that he might teach by divine testimony that He was Christ whom he had proclaimed before he knew Him, lest, as S. Chrysostom says, anyone should think that the testimony of John was not confirmed by divine witness, or that it was given to personal recognition, or friendship, or favour. What, then, did John learn from the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven? Nothing new; but the knowledge which he possessed before was made perfect and confirmed —as Bede and Rupertus say on *John* i.

I ought to be baptised by Thee.

Some think, from these words, that John was baptised by Christ afterwards; as well as from the following: "Suffer it to be so now" (S. Chrysostom, Jerome, Euthymius, Theophylact, *in loc.*).

Verse 15. *Suffer it to be so now.*

Now, when I have not yet been declared to be Christ by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the Voice from heaven, I come not as Christ, but as one of the multitude, a private person; and thou oughtest not therefore to refuse baptism to Me because I am greater than thou. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others.

So.

That is, when the greater is baptised by the less, the master by the servant.

It behoves us to fulfil.

If it be not actually necessary, yet it is becoming. It is

a work, as it is called, of supererogation. "We" may mean myself in undergoing, you in administering, baptism; and "to fulfil," the omitting nothing not only that is necessary, but even that is profitable and becoming. This is the force of the word "fulfil".

All justice.

Some explain this of the justice of the Law, which, as S. Paul says, consists of washings and external ceremonies (*Heb.* ix. 10), which Christ pleased to fulfil, as He pleased to be circumcised, because He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it (*Matt.* v. 17), as S. Jerome and Euthymius, who say that most necessarily the baptism of John was a sacrament of the Old Law; an assertion which many of the old Schoolmen adopt from their Master, the Master of the Sentences.

S. Thomas, who alone was as great as all the rest, says, more correctly, that it was neither a sacrament nor a ceremony of the Law, but a mean between the Law and the Gospel; instituted indeed by God, but only for a brief period, that He might bring in Christ and His baptism, as John himself was a mean between the Prophets and Christ.

The word "justice" in this passage may be taken to mean no part of the Old Law, nor justice placed in any positive precept, which was of necessary observation, but whatever was agreeable to the virtue and duty of a holy man, though not to do it might be without sin. All the words of John show this. "I ought to be baptised by Thee," as if he had said: "Thou hast no need of me". Christ answers: "Though it be not necessary, yet it becomes Me to be baptised by thee, that we may fulfil all justice"; that is, that we may perform not only the Commandments, but whatever is just and consistent with holiness. Why it behoved Christ to be baptised has been said on verse 17.

Verse 16. *And Jesus being baptised, forthwith came out of the water.*

The word "forthwith" is very forcible. S. Mark (i. 10) also uses it. It does not refer to the verb *went up*, but to what follows: "And the heavens were opened"; and the words are thus to be united: "Immediately that He was baptised, when He had scarcely come up out of the water, the heavens were opened". This meaning may be gathered from the words of S. Mark: "And forthwith coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened"; that is: "Immediately on His ascending". Reason also teaches this. For there was no need to tell us that Christ, immediately after He had received baptism, went up out of the water. Who doubts this, or what did Christ, when baptised, do in the river? But when it is said that: "Immediately after His baptism, and going up out of the river, He saw the heavens opened," there was not merely a useful, but a necessary reason. For the Evangelist desired to teach that the heavenly and divine testimony was so united with the baptism that there was no delay between them, and that God seems to have awaited nothing else to show His own testimony to Christ but that His baptism and the testimony of John should precede it; for God should confirm the testimony of man, not man that of God.

S. Luke says, that on the prayer of Christ the heavens were opened, and the dove descended. We must believe that, as soon as Christ came up out of the water, He threw Himself upon His knees to receive His Father's testimony with due reverence; for even sons, when well taught, uncover their heads when speaking to their parents.

And lo, the heavens were opened unto Him.

That is, to Christ—as is clear from these words, and S. Mark (i. 10). But we must believe that the heavens were

opened to all who stood by—that is, they were seen by all to be, as it were, opened when they were opened in verisimilitude, that all might understand that both the Holy Spirit and the Voice came down from heaven; but they are said to be opened to Christ only, because they were opened on His account. Whether they were opened in very fact, or only in appearance, is of no great moment; but as the question has been raised it should be decided. S. Chrysostom, thinking of the heavens no otherwise than as of all other corporeal substances, seems to say that they were opened in actual fact; but The Author (*Hom.* iv.) and S. Jerome on this passage, and on *Ezekiel* i., think that they were not opened actually, but in appearance alone. Their opinion seems the more probable, both because it mattered nothing as to the result, whether they were so in reality or only in appearance, and because it is not credible that the solidity of the heavens should be broken up not of necessity, whilst in other passages they are said to have been opened when it is plain that in fact they were not (*Gen.* vii. 11; *Acts* vii. 57); where, if they had been really opened, not only S. Stephen, but all who stood by, must have seen it, whereas he alone is said to have done so. Again, they are said at times to have been shut when they were not actually so; for that is not really shut which was not opened before (*Deut.* ii. 17; 1 *Kings* viii. 25; 2 *Paralip.* vi. 26; vii. 13).

And he said.

Many refer this to John, from *S. John* i. 13. This seems rather forced, as, after the beginning (verse 14) John was not named, and all the preceding words were referred to Christ. S. Mark, the interpreter of S. Matthew, refers them to Christ (i. 10). The words of S. John (i. 13) are not contrary, because, as has been said before, not only Christ and John, but all those who were present, saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending: Christ, because they

were opened for Him; John, because this was given to him by God as a sign; the others, that by it they might believe John. But all the Evangelists do not mean to say the same thing. SS. Matthew and Mark, because they spoke about Christ, said that He saw the Spirit descend. S. John, treating of the Baptist, said that he saw it. No one asserts that the multitude saw it, because no one wrote of them.

As a dove.

Tertullian (*De Carn. Chst.*) thinks it to have been a true dove. So S. Augustin (*L. de Ag. Chst.*, chap. 22). Others think the same. I do not agree with them, because S. Augustin only proves that it was a true body, which is a very different thing to a true dove. In many other places he says that it was only the appearance of a dove, as do most others. This is the more probable because all the Evangelists, as if by concert, use a particle of comparison, and it was not necessary to the action that it should have been an actual dove. But whether it was a real body with the appearance of a dove, or whether it were not an actual body, but something with the appearance of such, so seen by the bystanders, is a different question. The opinion of S. Augustin seems tenable, that it was a true body, because, if not so, either it would not have been seen by all, or there must have been as many miracles as there were spectators —as the miracle must have been wrought, not in the body of the dove, but in the eyes of the bystanders, which is not to be hastily granted. One thing we must guard against, as S. Augustin warns us—the idea that the Holy Spirit is united hypostatically to the body of the dove, as the Son of God is to the human nature—which Tertullian seems to think: but as we read that angels often took human bodies, that they might be seen by men. It has been asked by some, and not without reason, why the Holy Ghost descended here in the form of a dove, but on the day of Pentecost in

the form of tongues of fire and of tongues (*Acts* ii. 3). The answer is easy: He now descended on Christ, not to ascend, because He was God Himself, and "God is a consuming fire" (*Deut.* iv. 24)—not to teach Him to speak, "because grace is poured abroad in His lips" (*Ps.* xliv. 3), but to give a testimony of Him. It is required of one who gives testimony of another, to describe the nature and peculiarities of the person of whom he speaks. It was said of Christ, "The bruised reed He shall not break, aud the smoking flax He shall not quench"; and it was said in the place in which the descent of the Holy Ghost was mentioned (*Isa.* xlii. 1, 2, 3). Christ says of Himself, "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (*S. Matt.* xi. 29). The dove is the most gentle of animals, and, as S. Cyprian says, one bitter without gall, cruel without biting. Under the appearance of the dove, the nature and, if I may so say, the habit of the Holy Ghost is shown. He is the Giver of all graces, "dividing to every man according as He will" (1 *Cor.* xii. 11). The dove signifies grace and meekness. The love of the Father to Christ also seems to be shown by it, as the appearance of the dove and the Voice that was heard agree. "This is My beloved Son." The dove is also a very amatory creature—always murmuring a song of love. Therefore the most beloved Spouse of God is often called a dove, and beloved (*Cant.* ii. 10, 14; v. 2; vi. 8). The Holy Ghost was given to the Apostles, because they needed Him to kindle them with love, and teach them to speak in different languages. He was therefore given under the form of fire and tongues.

And coming upon Him.

Upon Christ—*ἐπ' αὐτον* for *ἐφ' ἑαύτον*. For the Greeks occasionally, and the Greeks and LXX. and Latin version frequently, use the demonstrative for the reciprocal pronoun, because in Hebrew the word עליו means both (1 *Kings* xvii. 39; xxiii. 6). Why the Holy Ghost descended upon

Christ when recently baptised is not difficult to be conjectured, and the ancient Fathers (S. Iren., iii. 19; S. Just., *Cont. Tryph.;* S. Amb., Pref. to lib. iii., *De Sp. Sto.;* S. Jerome, *Quest. 2 to Algas*) have told us (*Isaiah* xi. 1, 2; xlii. 1; lxi. 1). The prophecies must be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit must come upon Christ, as S. John (i. 33) says, to "remain," that is, to rest upon Him; and then especially when He was initiated by His baptism as His director (*magisterium*) to announce (glad tidings) to the meek, to heal the broken in heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, and freedom to the prisoners, that all might understand that He was the Christ of whom Isaiah had prophesied so long before. When Christ, therefore, had read in the synagogue that passage of *Isaiah*, He added, "This day is fulfilled this scripture" (*S. Luke* iv. 21).

Verse 17. *This is My beloved Son.*

S. Mark (i. 11), S. Luke (iii. 22), say, "Thou art". They are not contrary to S. Matthew, but one probably gives the words, the others the meaning. Which give the words is uncertain, probably SS. Mark and Luke because they are more in number, and because we should expect that the Voice would be addressed to Him on whom the Spirit descended; as, in the Transfiguration, because the Voice was directed to the Apostles, it did not say, "Thou art," but, "This is My beloved Son" (*S. Luke* ix. 35). This is My Son, My most beloved. The double article, ὁ υἱὸς ὁ ἀγάπητος, shows that God spoke not of any son, but of His one only Son by nature, from eternity, equal to Himself; for others are sons by adoption only. S. Athanasius (*Orat. Cont. Arian:* "*Quod Deus ex Deo*") explains the only-begotten Son as the beloved or, what is more forcible, the most dear. For not Homer alone, but the sacred books as well, give this appellation to only-begotten sons (*Gen.* xxii. 2). On the other hand, again, S. John (iii. 16, and 1 *Ep.* iv. 9) puts "only begotten" for "most dear".

In whom I am well pleased.

ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα—In quo placui. But our version, to fill up the sense, has added a dative case, *mihi.* The expression *εὐδόκεω* is very commonly used in Scripture, as is its derivative *εὐδόκια.* Our version generally renders *εὐδόκια* by *sibi complacet* (*S. Matt.* xii. 18; xvii. 5; *S. Mark* i. 11; *S. Luke* iii. 22; xii. 32; *Coloss.* i. 19; 2 *Peter* i. 17)—*εὐδόκια* is *beneplacitum* (as *Ephes.* i. 9) and sometimes *bona voluntas* (as *S. Luke* ii. 14). There has been much discussion on these two words, for, although they are true, they do not seem altogether to convey the full expression, and to fill up the meaning. The Greek word has been introduced from the LXX., who always render the Hebrew רצה by *ἐυδοκεῖν,* as in *Psalm* xxxix. 14; xliii. 4; nor is it rendered in any other way except in *Isaiah* xlii. 1. So that from the Hebrew word רצה the force of the Greek one is to be understood. The former has many meanings: "to be appeased," "to be reconciled," "to restore to favour" (as *Psalm* lxxxiv. 1) רצית יהוה. "Thou hast been appeased," reconciled to thy land, that is, to thy people, as the Hebrew reads, and the words that follow confirm it: יעקב שבת שבות "Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob," *εὐδοκήσας.*

In this place, therefore, to retain the words of our version, "In whom I am well pleased," does not mean only "Whom I have loved," nor "In whom I am greatly delighted," nor, "In whom I rest," as some moderns explain it, but "In whom," that is, "through whom I am appeased and reconciled to the world; that is, I have decreed and determined to be appeased and reconciled. When I look on Him I lay aside all My wrath and My displeasure." For the Father chose, by that Voice sent forth from heaven, to declare, not only that Christ was His Son, but that He had sent Him, that men might receive Him more willingly. He alludes to the Prophet Isaiah

(xlii. 1) רצתה נפשי. Why this Voice was sent from heaven it is not difficult to conjecture. The dove is a silent bird, and might signify many things. The Voice was added to explain the symbol. "As," says S. Augustin, "the word came to the element and a sacrament was made;" for that which was obscurely shown by the elements is declared openly by words. "The Son of God," says S. Hilary (*Can.* ii.), "is shown to the hearing and sight; and to a people unbelieving and disobedient to the Prophets, a testimony is sent of their Lord both by sight and voice. He is worthy of belief who heard and saw."

Something resembling this took place in the Transfiguration (*S. Matt.* xvii. 5; *S. Luke* ix. 35); but for another object: that the chiefs of the Apostles, who, as S. Paul says, were to be the pillars of the Church, might be strengthened. All the ancient Fathers, and especially those who contend against the Arians, have given another reason; it is, that the mystery of the Trinity might be declared of the Father, who spoke; of the Son, who received the testimony; of the Holy Ghost, who descended in the form of the dove. What voice it was, or how formed, is not difficult to be imagined. God, who forms all human voices by the air in a human throat, was able to form a human voice in the same air without a human throat, as we see in *Exodus* iii. 4; *S. Mark* ix. 6, 7; *S. John* xii. 28; *Acts* x. 15.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER—CHRIST STILLS THE TEMPEST AT SEA.

Verse 1. *Then Jesus was led.*

THE Greek *ἀνήχθη, subductus, abreptus;* S. Mark has *ἐκβάλλει, expellit, eum Spiritus.* He was probably not carried through the air, as Habacuc (*Daniel* xiv. 35) and S. Philip (*Acts* viii. 19), or the Evangelist would not have been silent on it; but He was led on foot, not by compulsion, but of His own free will. S. Matthew uses the word *subductus*, and S. Mark *expulsus*, not as if by force, but to show the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, as S. Paul (*Romans* viii. 14) and as SS. Hilary, Jerome, and The Author say. It is not meant that He had never before been led by the Holy Ghost, but that the power of the latter was then shown most especially.

Into the desert.

Into a place fit for temptation and a personal conflict (*Eccles.* iv.). They who pass a life in solitude are not, therefore, to be blamed. This kind of life S. John the Baptist first, and after him many most holy men from his example, SS. Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nazienzen, Theodoret, all men of experience, have described in many volumes as being in a manner divine. He is not alone who follows God as his leader, whose aid is so much the greater in solitude than in the city, as it is hindered less by men. By the desert we should understand that of Judæa, as (iii. 1) the same as that in which S. John the Baptist

passed his life, both as it was near Jordan and because it is called absolutely "the desert". He was led, therefore, by the Spirit into the innermost solitude where, as S. Mark (i. 13) tells us, He lived with the beasts.

By the Spirit.

In verses 5, 8, and in *S. Luke* iv. 5, 9, He is said to have been led by the devil, who is also called a spirit (as viii. 16; x. 1; xii. 43); but in this passage the Holy Ghost is to be understood, because the Evangelist spoke of Him (chap. iii. 16), and because He is called the Spirit absolutely, and with the article, which is never used unless the Holy Spirit is intended, as Didymus and S. Jerome have observed.

To be tempted.

To tempt is to incite to sin (*Acts* v. 3; 1 *Cor.* vii. 5; 1 *Thess.* iii. 5; *S. James* i. 13; *Apoc.* iii. 10). In this sense the devil is said to tempt. Hence his name, Satan; in Hebrew "the adversary"; in Greek διάβολος, calumniator, plotter, ensnarer, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Men also, as agents of the devil, are accustomed in this way to tempt one another: God never; for "God is not a tempter to evils" (*S. James* i. 13); although the heretical followers of Calvin say that even in this manner even God, and that at first, tempts; thus giving the office of the devil to God. For to try, is to seek and inquire with the object of gaining knowledge, as both God, the devil, and men do. But God does so in one manner, the devil and men in another. The latter, to learn that of which they are ignorant; the former that what He knows already, He may seem to know, by searching and exploring; or, not that He Himself, but that they whom He tempts, may know themselves, as S. Augustin explains. So *Genesis* xxii. 1; *Exodus* xvi. 4; *Deut.* viii. 2; xiii. 3; *Wisdom* iii. 5; *Hebrews* iv. 15; xi. 17, 37; *Apoc.* ii. 2. For to tempt is to provoke to anger, as when we are said to tempt God because we wish

to try His power (v. 17; *Exodus* xv. 2, 7; *Numbers* xiv. 22; *Psalm* lxxvii. 18, 41; xciv. 9; chap. v. 14). Christ could not be tempted except in a second or third sense, yet it might be believed that He went into the wilderness to offer Himself to the devil to be tempted in every way possible, and that He might be solicited to commit sin, so as to be able to say, "The prince of this world in Me hath not anything" (*S. John* iv. 30). This is plain from the fact of the devil's having tempted Him to throw Himself down headlong, and to worship him, either of which acts would have been most deadly sin. Satan wished to test Him by these means whether He were the Son of God, as He said; for he knew that if He could be tempted to sin, He could not be the Son of God.

By the devil.

A proper name, or rather surname (*cognomen*), of Lucifer the chief of the devils, derived from his great power of calumniating and ensnaring (as *Mark* xxv. 41; *Apoc.* xii. 9; xx. 2, 20). For Christ, the prince of men, wished to provoke the devil, the prince of the devils, to a single conflict, that He might both spare His own soldiers, and that the leader of the enemy might be vanquished at the first attack, and his whole army put to flight. This one reason is given by the Evangelists for Christ's having gone into the wilderness: "Because the enemy did not venture to attack Him, he met Him and provoked Him, as it were; knowing that He would not contend with him unless provoked (S. Hilary, *Can.* 3; S. Ambrose, iv. *on S. Luke* ii.; The Author, *Hom.* v.).

We may believe that there were other reasons for Christ's having retired into the wilderness, though not mentioned by the Evangelists. Moses, the ancient law-giver, spent forty days alone in the mountain before he received the tablets of stone. John, before he went out to preach, passed his life in the same desert. From his having come

out from the wilderness, and not from among men, he was thought to have come out from God, and was received with the greater honour.

Christ, therefore, pleased to bring out the Gospel from the wilderness. He desired to show that He it was of whom Moses was the figure; whose forerunner was John, whose steps He followed through a desert. He desired to teach us by His example, that when we meditate upon our way of life or any grave matter, we should forsake the multitude and retire into the desert, and bring our thoughts before God, a course prevented by a concourse, but assisted by solitude. For even the comic writer could say, "You come from meditation in some solitary place".—Terence, *Andria*, act ii., sc. iv., line 3.

Many reasons have been given for Christ's willing to be tempted.

1. It became a young soldier to perfect himself in that school, that his more serious contests should be made stronger by lighter skirmishes.

2. That having Himself been tempted in every way, as S. Paul says, He might help us in our temptations more effectually, and that we might have a High Priest (*Heb.* ii. 18; iv. 15).

3. To teach us by His own example, when we come to the service of God, to prepare our minds for temptation (*Ecclus.* ii. 1); and as SS. Hilary and Chrysostom have shown.

4. That when we have overcome our enemies, He might make us stronger (as *S. John* xvi. 33). For, as S. Ambrose says: "If He had not striven He had not conquered for me" (*In Luc.* ii., lib. iv.).

5. That we also might conquer in His victory. So S. Augustin on *Psalm* lx.: "Know thyself to have been tempted in Him, and see thyself to be victorious in Him. Christ was the Rock. That rock, therefore, on which we are built,

was first struck by winds, by flames, by rain. When Christ was tempted by the devil, see in what firmness He wished to strengthen us"; and on *Psalm* xc., part 2: "Christ was tempted that Christians might not be overcome by the tempter".

Verse 2. *And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights.*

That is, forty entire days, for so the Hebrews speak. The Evangelist therefore added forty nights to the days, to show that He did not fast after the manner of the Jews. By day they taste neither food nor drink, but they eat at night. Christ tasted nothing. Moses had done the same before (*Exod.* xxiv. 18-34), and Elias (3 *Kings* xix. 8).

The Ancients observed that this was a mystical number (S. Basil, *Hom. on the Forty Martyrs;* S. Ambrose, *Serm.* xxxiv. *on Lent,* and iv. *on S. Luke;* S. Jerome, *On* 3 *Jonah;* S. Aug., *On Genesis; ad. litt.*, chap. 169, *De Consens.* ii. 4). It is clear that this had not been invented by them, but had been taught by God in many passages of Holy Scripture. For not only did Christ, Moses, and Elias fast a full forty days (which alone would have sufficed to show us that there was some mystery in that number), but we see many other things done in this number which could not possibly have been done by chance. Forty days and nights when the earth was purified by the deluge (*Gen.* vii. 12). The dead were preserved forty days in spices before their burial (*Gen.* l. 3). The men sent by Moses explored the Promised Land for forty days (*Numb.* xiii. 26). Goliath, the type of our adversary the devil, stood reviling the people of Israel forty days. The children of Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness (*Exod.* xvi. 35). Ezekiel was commanded to lie on his right side forty days, that he might bear the iniquities of the house of Judah (*Ezek.* iv. 6).

Egypt was commanded to be deserted and repentant forty years (*Ezek.* xxxix. 11, 12). Christ remained on earth forty days after His resurrection before ascending into heaven. It cannot have been by chance that this number so often recurs. The number forty, then, as S. Augustin says, signifies the whole course of our lives—the time destined to penance and the expiation of sins. Fasting is a part of penance. The followers of Calvin "devoutly wish either that Christ had not fasted forty days, or that the Evangelists had not related it, or that the Church had not turned the example of Christ and the use of penance to our good". "It is a vain superstition," they say, "that, because Christ once fasted this number of days, we should fast as many days every year. It is presumption to imitate Christ. We do Him an intolerable injury which might be returned to us. The Gospel, whose sign was the fasting of Christ, should be rescinded." If what Christ did once is not to be repeated by us every year, let them not celebrate the Lord's resurrection every week; for Christ rose only once. If it be arrogance to imitate Christ, S. Paul was guilty of that sin; for he calls himself a follower of Christ; and especially in His most peculiar office; if he might die for the Church (*Coloss.* i. 24). We imitate, because we follow, though we do not attain. We follow as near as we can—men to God. It is enough that we keep the same path. We do Christ no injury, because we make Him not a companion, but a leader.

But Christ did not command. Be it so. He did not command, but He certainly did acts; and He did them in mystery. He fasted in mystery forty days, not more nor less, that by this number, as S. Jerome says, He might consecrate to us our forty days' fast. And not S. Jerome alone, but all the most ancient learned and holy Doctors of the Church, hold that either Christ Himself or the Apostles, imitating His example, taught the forty days' fast (S. Ambrose, *Serms. on Lent*, xxiii., xxv., xxvii., xxxvi.,

xxxviii.; S. Leo, *Serms.* vi., ix.; S. Jerome, who terms it the heritage of Christ).

After He was hungry.

This shows that for forty days before He had not hungered. It is not said whether Moses and Elias hungered before, or after, or not at all. It is, therefore, to be believed that they did not. This is said as peculiar to Christ. For the power of God which preserved also satisfied. Why, then, did Christ hunger? That to a timid enemy, who feared to attack a *quasi* God, He might show Himself to be a man, and thereby encourage him to attack; and because that enemy feared to approach an armed man, He laid aside, in a manner, the armour of His divinity, and, like a man naked and unarmed, and differently to the custom of combatants, He entered the arena hungry, and challenged His opponent; not like others, by boasting of His strength, but by the display of His weakness (S. Iren., iii. 32; S. Chrys, *Hom.* xiii. *on S. Matthew;* The Author; S. Jerome, *in loc.;* S. Amb., iv. 2 *on S. Luke*). S. Ambrose says well and cleverly: "The hunger of Christ was a pious fraud, that, wherein the devil was on his guard through fear of the result (*majora metuens*), he might be induced by the appearance of hunger to tempt the man before him".

Verse 3. *And coming to Him.*

How, or with what form, the devil appeared, the Evangelists do not state. He had the power either of appearing invisibly, as he does when he tempts us daily, or of assuming some visible shape. All authors think that he came in a human, corporeal form; which is very probable, because he spoke much with Christ: because he wanted Christ to worship him: and because, if he had appeared in any other shape, the Evangelists would have told us. For when he tempted Eve in the form of a serpent, because that was a rare shape, Scripture has related it.

The Tempter.

Ὁ πειράζων. The name of the office of all the devils, but here an attribute of the chief of them. For he who had lately been called the devil is now termed the tempter—as if it had been said: The wrestler comes, the combatant is at hand—as in 1 *Thess.* iii. 5: "Lest, perhaps, he that tempteth should have tempted you". It is a use of the Hebrew word שטן Satan, and of the Greek *διάβολος* (as in verse 10; chap. xvi. 16, 23; *S. Luke* xxii. 3, 31; *Acts* v. 3; 1 *Cor.* vii. 5; *Apoc.* xii. 9; xx. 2, where the prince of the devils is called by his proper name Satan). I am not aware why, in the Old Testament, our version always calls him Satan, and in the New, by the addition of two letters, Satanas, unless, perhaps, the Old Testament renders the word from the original Hebrew, which is שטן the New from the Greek, in which the translator preferred *σάτανας* after the LXX., rather than *Σάταν*. Diabolus is the proper name of this great potentate, as appears from the following passages of Scripture: *Ps.* cviii. 6; *Ephes.* vi. 11; 1 *Peter* v. 8; *Apoc.* xii. 9; xx. 2.

If Thou be the Son of God.

Satan had perhaps heard the voice from heaven, or he knew the fact from the teaching of John, or from common report. It is to be believed that the devil said this, not as one who doubts, or denies, or derides, like his agents when they said, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (xxvi. 42); but as believing, and declaring, and wishing to counsel Christ well. As if we should say, "As Thou art assuredly the Son of God, suffer not hunger, but, as Thou art able, and food is not to be procured otherwise, command that these stones be made bread". It was more in keeping with the craft of that serpent so to tempt, as appearing not to tempt, but to advise Christ well and for His advantage.

Command (dic).

Speak (*dic*) has more force than command (*jube*), and therefore both the Hebrews and the Evangelists speak thus. For it is more that God should say, "Let there be light, and there was light" (*Gen.* i. 3), than if it had been said, "God commanded". There is more meaning in the words, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were founded" (*Psalm* xxxii. 6), than if God had said, "I have commanded". For it means that God merely opened His lips, and all things were made. In like manner, "speak" means more in this place than "command"; for Satan speaks here as of that Word by which he knew that the world was made, Who, by the same Word by which He had made the heavens and the earth, could also make stones become bread.

That these stones.

Stones, rather than earth, air, or trees, both because stones were lying at Christ's feet, and because it was more difficult, and because a stone has no resemblance to bread, being most opposite to it. Hence the words of Christ (chap. vii. 9).

Be made bread.

Theophylact and others think that the devil, from curiosity, said *panes*, not *panem*. But the reason seems merely to be that stones is in the plural, especially as S. Luke uses the singular, *panem*. We cannot decide, therefore, which word Satan used, because one Evangelist gives the words and the other the meaning; and which gives the one and which the other we cannot say.

Verse 4. *It is written.*

Because the devil seemed to allude to *Genesis* i. and *Psalm* xxxii. 6; Scripture confutes him, as it does in the other temptations also.

Not by bread alone.

Christ speaks of ordinary bread, but after the manner of the Hebrew all provision is intended.

Live.

Ζήσεται—shall live; that is, is able to live—the potential mood, as grammarians say. In Hebrew יחיה as, "Man shall not see Me and live" (*Exod.* xxxiii. 20); that is, no one who sees Me will be able to live.

But in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.

The Hebrew is כל־מוצא על פי יהוה (*Deut.* viii. 3); in every *thing* that cometh from the mouth of God, *ad verbum*. But the LXX. and Latin version give the meaning rather than the words, and add the word *verbi*. This, as has been observed, they do in many other places. The Evangelists also do the same, whether in imitation of the LXX. or with their own design.

The meaning is: God has no need of ordinary food to sustain His servants; for He is able, by a single word, to create a new kind of food; the same was said of the manna (*Deut.* viii. 3). Christ does not answer that He is or is not the Son of God, because, though Satan most especially desired to know this, he did not ask about it, but feigned to believe it. He appeared merely to give advice, "Command that these stones be made bread". Christ therefore replied to what he had said: not to what he kept silence about—the best method of deluding those who ask deceitfully.

Verse 5. *Then.*

That is, secondly. It does not mean that this was done immediately after the first temptation. It is probable that some time elapsed; for when we call this the second temptation, there is no certain proof that it was such, for S. Luke (iv. 9) puts this temptation, not second, but last of all, and puts that second which S. Matthew puts last; for the Evangelists, like the other authors of Scripture, do not keep to the order of time. It is probable that S. Luke commemorated the temptations in the order in which they

occurred to him, S. Matthew in that in which they happened. It seemed very probable that the devil departed in terror at the words, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," and overcome. These words were uttered by Christ only on the mountain, when the devil had said, "All these things will I give thee"; for the Evangelist at once relates it, and the demand of Satan required that reply.

Took.

How the devil took Christ the Evangelists do not tell us, and there may be different opinions on the subject. This is certain—that he did not take Him against His will; nor could he compel Christ, whom he could not have even approached, unless Christ were willing that he should do so, and had even put Himself forward to meet him. It is uncertain whether the devil carried Christ visibly or invisibly, and, if visibly, whether through the air or on His feet. S. Cyprian, in his *Sermon on the Temptation and Fasting of Our Lord*, whom others have followed, thinks that it was invisibly, like the journeys of the Prophets when Ezekiel was carried from Chaldæa to Jerusalem to measure the city (*Ezek.* xl. 1), and other like cases. These are great authorities, but they seem to be in error, because it would seem wholly out of place to suppose that the devil sent visions into the mind of Christ as God did into those of the Prophets.

The Prophets also declare that what happened to them happened not in reality but in visions (*Ezek.* xlii.), although they do not say that the events could be understood because they were Prophets.

But the Evangelists not only do not declare that Christ underwent His temptations in a vision, but they even indicate that they happened in reality. For how could Christ have thrown Himself down in a vision? or how could the angels have borne Him up, if He had thrown Himself down, not in fact, but in an illusion? (*falsa opi-*

nione), or how could such a "false opinion" of His having thrown Himself down have entered men's minds?

Some think that Christ was taken up and carried through the air, which the word παραλαμβάνειν would seem to warrant, as say S. Jerome, The Author, S. Gregory, and Strabus. Others, as Euthymius (*On S. Luke* iv.), think that He was led upon His feet. This seems the more probable because it appears very little likely that Christ would have permitted such contact of Himself by Satan as to carry Him from place to place. Besides, if the devil, by permission of Christ, had done this, he would have declared too plainly who he was, which, when he tempts men, he is not apt to do. He transfigures himself as an angel of light (2 *Cor.* xi. 14). S. Luke does not say that the devil took, πάρελαβεν, but ἤγαγεν, led Christ. Nor does the former always signify such a method of conveyance as carrying. It sometimes has the force of leading (as *S. Matt.* i. 20, 24; ii. 14, 20).

Into the holy city.

Into Jerusalem, so called because God dwelt in it, because of the Ark and the Temple, which were there. So it was commonly called, and the Prophets had foretold that it should have this name (*Isaiah* lii. 1; lx. 14; *Zachar.* viii. 3).

Upon the pinnacle of the Temple.

Upon a wing or pinnacle of the Temple. Some say that this was a sloping and pointed turret on which was a metal weather-cock that turned with the wind, and which, from its resemblance to a wing, was called πτερύγιον; such as we now see on our churches and palaces. But we find nothing of the kind on the Temple of Jerusalem. They are more correct who think that the pinnacle was a paribolus, fixed to the top of the house, that no one walking there might fall over. Such God commanded to be built (*Deut.* xxii. 8). The Latins, I believe, call it *podium*. It

was so called because it was built out from the house, and seemed to hang in the air like a wing. It is easy to see why the devil brought Christ hither; he wished to persuade Him to cast Himself down, and therefore brought Him to the most conspicuous spot. Jerusalem was built on a hill, and the Temple was on the most elevated place of the whole city on Mount Moriah, and the pinnacle was the highest point of the Temple.

If Thou be the Son of God.

The devil ardently desired to know whether Christ were the Son of God or not. It is credible, however, that he spoke as affirming Him to be so, as has been said on verse 3.

In their hands shall they bear Thee up.

Some have thought that Satan omitted of purpose that part of the testimony, "He shall keep thee in all Thy ways" (*Psalm* xc. 11); because they would seem to be opposed to his nature. These understand by the word "ways" all such acts as are not undertaken in wicked rashness, such as that of casting ourselves down headlong, but with piety and prudence. This, if not true, is ingenious and like what might be expected from the subtlety of the devil. It is certain that he corrupted the meaning, at least, if not the words of the passage. Nor did the Holy Spirit intend to suggest that whatever a righteous man should attempt, whether right or wrong, should prosper; but that in whatever he did as a righteous man, even though the whole world were opposed to him, he should find assistance so present from God, that he might appear to be borne up by the hands of angels. The words "in their hands" rather than on their shoulders, refers to the custom of carrying in our hands whatever we consider our most valuable property, lest we lose it or have it stolen from us. What is said in *Psalm* xc., the devil, arguing *a minore ad majus*, applied

to Christ, who was not merely a man righteous in degree but also the Son of God.

Verse 7. *Into a high mountain.*

What mountain it was the Evangelists do not tell us, and therefore we can neither know nor inquire without the fault of curiosity. This we know, that Jerusalem was surrounded by mountains (*Psalm* lxxxvi. 1; cxxiv. 2); although we have no knowledge, it is very probable that the devil took Christ up into some mountain in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

Verse 8. *All the kingdoms of the world.*

How Satan could show Christ all the kingdoms of the world from one mountain has long been a question much agitated. Some, as before, think that it was only done in a vision. The Author and Euthymius think, with more reason, that it was done, not that Christ should see them, but so that he could point out with his finger the coast or boundary (*plaga*) of each kingdom. And it was necessary that he should show each single kingdom thoroughly, for Scripture often speaks as putting the whole for the greater part.

And the glory of them.

A Hebraism; it means whatever each kingdom most excelled in, and which it is probable that the devil rather described by word than by pointing the hand.

Verse 9. *All these things will I give Thee.*

The devil added the words in *S. Luke* iv. 6. Because he could not elicit from Christ whether He were the Son of God, he pretended to be such himself. The Son only could say, "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth". The devil is called the prince of this world (*S. John* xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11), not because he is the prince of it, but of the wickedness which is the peculiar property of it. He is,

therefore, able neither to give kingdoms nor to take them away; for this is the prerogative of God alone (*Proverbs* viii. 15; *Daniel* ii. 21). It is out of his power to give or to take away, not kingdoms only, but any other good thing without the permission of God. Of this Job is a proof (i. 11, 12). He cannot even give those very vices of which he is the lord, unless we ourselves permit him to do so (*Proverbs* v. 22).

Verse 10. *Begone, Satan.*

Many Greek and Latin copies read, Behind me—*post me retro me*, ὀπίσω μοῦ (*S. Matt.* xvi. 23; *S. Mark* viii. 23). Christ here calls Satan by his own name, whom the Evangelist (verse 3) had called "The Tempter"—to show that He knew that he was not the Son of God whom he was pretending to be, but the devil whom he pretended not to be. The words of Christ are the words of one commanding at once and rebuking.

The Lord thy God shalt thou adore.

Christ did not give the words, but the meaning; for the Hebrew is not תשתחוה "thou shalt worship," but תירא "thou shalt fear". But with the Hebrews to fear God is to adore and worship Him; and the fear of God implies all adoration and worship; as good and devout men are everywhere said to fear God (*Job* i. 1, 8, 9; ii. 3; *Ps.* xxi. 24, 25, *et al. pass.*). This is mostly said of those who are the people of God. "Only" is not found in the original, but was added by the LXX. and the Latin, to express the meaning. When God commands us to worship Him and serve Him, He forbids us to worship other gods and serve them. It is as if He had said, "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve".

These are the only temptations which the three Evangelists have related. But it is not to be supposed that He was tried only by these when He went into the desert that

He might be tempted, and S. Mark speaks (i. 13) as if He were tempted during the whole forty days. The Author and S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 4), Bede and Remigius, hold this opinion.

Verse 12. *And when Jesus had heard.*

This did not happen immediately after the temptation; for, some time before John was cast into prison, Christ baptised and preached the Gospel, and John also baptised and preached, whence arose a contention among their disciples, as described by S. John (iii. 22, 23; iv. 1).

He retired into Galilee.

The reason of this is easily gathered from the words of the Evangelist, who signifies that Jesus went thither after John was cast into prison, lest He Himself should share the same fate. For John was delivered up in Lower Galilee, or Galilee of the Jews, of which Herod was tetrarch. He then went from Galilee of the Jews, which is called Lower Galilee, into Upper Galilee, which was beyond the jurisdiction of Herod, and was called Galilee of the Gentiles; because it was inhabited for the most part by Gentiles. Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty cities in it (3 *Kings* ix. 11). S. Matthew says in the thirteenth verse that Christ left Nazareth, which was in the Galilee of Herod, after the fasting and temptation, and came and dwelt in Capernaum, which was on the confines of the other Galilee (verses 13, 14, 15). It is clear from this that the accounts of S. Matthew here, and of S. Luke (in iv. 14), are not the same. S. Luke is speaking there of the return of Christ immediately after the fasting and temptation into the Galilee of Herod; S. Matthew here of His going out of the Galilee of Herod into the Galilee of the Gentiles. This distinction not only some authors of less note, but even S. Augustin himself, appears to have overlooked (*De Consens.*, ii. 18).

Verse 14. *That it might be fulfilled.*

Some refer this to the prophecy of Isaiah, which they explain of the liberation of the three tribes, Zabulon, Nephthalim, and Aser, who inhabited those parts. The Evangelist, according to custom, applies it to Christ, as he does others (ii. 15, 18; iii. 3). The passage in Isaiah is difficult, because the Hebrews not only adopt a different meaning but have a different reading and context, which both our version and the Evangelist follow. We do not read that the prophecy was properly fulfilled before the coming and preaching of Christ.

Verse 15. *Land of Zabulon and land of Nephthalim, by way of the sea.*

This was the territory of the two tribes, Zabulon and Nephthalim, who had their lot in Upper Galilee, a maritime district (*Joshua*, xix. 10, 33). These three tribes were near the sea of Phœnicia, where Tyre held rule. The Greeks say ὅδον θαλάσσης, the accusative being put adverbially—that is, towards the sea—following probably the LXX., who so render it, because the Hebrews say דרו *via*, that is, *versus*, towards.

Beyond the Jordan.

We all know that the land of Zabulon and Nephthali was not beyond Jordan, but this side of it, as regards Jerusalem. The truth may be that the people, when coming from Egypt, were accustomed before they crossed the Jordan to call the land of Canaan, which was beyond Jordan, ארץ הירדן בעבר that is, the country beyond Jordan (*Numb.* xxxii. 19; *Deut.* iii. 20, 26; xi. 30). They retained this custom even after they had passed the Jordan and entered Palestine, speaking as they did when beyond Jordan: as, on the other hand, before they had passed the Jordan, the country which was to them *Cis* Jordan they called *trans*—speaking as if they were already in Canaan.

If this appear far-fetched, it may be said, more briefly and truly, that the Hebrew expression בעבר הירדן means both this side (*citra*) and beyond (*ultra*) (2 *Paralip.* xx. 2), אעבר לים from a land beyond the sea.

Verse 17. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

(*Vid.* chap. iii. 2.) We need only observe here that both Christ and S. John began their preaching with the same words; that we might understand John to have been the ambassador of Christ, and to have used, not his own words, but his Master's, by whom he was sent, and that the beginning of the Gospel is repentance.

Verse 18. *By the sea of Galilee.*

This was not a sea, but a lake formed by the influx of the Jordan into a lower basin. It was called a sea from the Hebrew custom, as we learn from S. Jerome, of terming every collection of water such. It bears the title of Galilee, because it is situated on the confines of the two Galilees; formerly, according to Pliny, it was called Tarichea. It had the name of Tiberias from a city which Herod had built on its coast not long before, and called Tiberias, from his desire to secure the favour of the Emperor Tiberius, as we learn from Josephus (*Antiq.*, xviii. 3). It was called the Lake of Gennesareth, because, according to Hegesippus, the whole region was termed Gennesareth. Strabo, Pliny, and Hegesippus have given descriptions of it.

Peter and Andrew.

The different Evangelists relate the calling of SS. Peter and Andrew in different ways. S. Mark (iii. 13) and S. Luke (vi. 13) seem to speak as if all the Apostles had been called at once; S. John (i. 40, 41) signifies that S. Andrew was called first, and then S. Peter; S. Luke (v. 10) says that S. Peter was called in another manner; for Christ when not passing by, but preaching from the ship of Peter,

and astonishing him by the miraculous draught of fishes, called Peter: no mention being made of S. Andrew.

The first question is easily answered. SS. Mark (iii. 13) and Luke (vi. 13) do not speak of the call of the Apostles as to follow Christ, but that they might be made Apostles; for they were first disciples, and then apostles, from the number of the disciples—that is, they were chosen to be masters to teach others; for they were chosen as bishops are now from the body of presbyters.

The second question is more difficult. It is difficult to see how they who say that SS. Peter and Andrew were called only once can prove their point. It is easily explained if we say that there were two callings of SS. Peter and Andrew—one in which they were admitted, not as disciples and companions, but as simple hearers, of which S. John speaks (i. 41); the other when they were so called that they left all things and followed Christ for good, as S. Augustin (*Tract. on S. John* vii.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xiv. *on S. Matt.*), Euthymius, and Theophylact explain it. Still more easy is it if we hold *three callings*—the first that of S. John, the second of S. Luke, the third of S. Matthew. The first two were not to the office of Apostles, but of friendship; the third was of Discipleship and Apostleship. N. de Lyra was of this opinion, of which I most thoroughly approve. Nor does it appear probable that any was called by Christ for any other purpose than that he might be made an Apostle, and leave all and follow Christ. If so, the two first should rather be termed admonitions than calls, and, as it were, preparations for the future call, lest the two greatest of the Apostles should appear to have been too little obedient to the call of Christ, when we read that the other Apostles at the first invitation left all and followed. In fact, none of the other Evangelists style the two first "calls". In *S. John* (i. 42) Christ only foretold to Peter what he should be, and S. Luke (v. 11) does not say that

they were called by Christ, but that when they saw the miracle of the fishes, they brought their ships to land and left all and followed Christ. We may explain this, not as if these things were wholly left and abandoned then—as when finally called they gave up and forsook everything, as S. Peter afterwards said (*S. Matt.* xix. 27)—but that they left their ships and nets, as the Samaritan woman left her waterpot, and came to the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done" (*S. John* iv. 28, 29). S. Matthew says here that they were called, because he relates the actual calling in which they left all things and followed Christ.

Verse 19. *Come ye after Me.*

A Hebraism for לכו אחרי—that is, follow Me.

Fishers of men.

The allusion is to their former employment (*Ps.* lxxvii. 70, 71). At the same time the work of the Apostles is described to be to fish for men and bring them to Christ, the chief Fisherman. For it is He who casts the nets into the sea, and gathers fish of every kind (xiii. 47); for by His word and power the fish are taken, and without Him they labour in vain throughout the whole night (*S. Luke* v. 5). Christians are the fish, for they are born in the waters of baptism. Christ was therefore called by the Ancients ἰχθυς, a fish: whose anagram is Ἰησους Χριστος Θέου υἱος σώτηρ, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour, on which we have a poem of the Erythræan Sibyl (Tertullian, *De Baptismo;* S. Augustin, xviii. 23; Prosper, *De Promiss. et Præd.* ii. 39).

Verse 23. *From Galilee.*

Galilee of the Gentiles, into which Christ had retired (verses 12, 15).

In their synagogues.

The Hebrews call them עדה *congregationes*, from their

place of meeting. The Greek term is *συναγώγη*, the peculiar expression of the LXX., from whom the Apostles borrowed the same. Christians, for the sake of distinction, substitute *ἐκκλήσια*, church, meaning both the place of assembly and the assembly itself. The Jewish synagogues, like other churches, were places designed also for teaching.

The Gospel of the kingdom.

The good message in which Christ foretold that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Verse 25. *And beyond Jordan.*

We must repeat the preposition *from:* And from all the region which was beyond Jordan. What was taken distributively before is now taken universally. Seneca uses a similar expression: "The enemy was assembled beyond the Alps"—that is, from the region which was beyond the Alps.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S SERMON UPON THE MOUNT—THE EIGHT BEATITUDES.

Verse 1. *And seeing.*

THIS passage cannot be easily understood unless we first understand whether this sermon of S. Matthew and that of S. Luke (iv. 17) are the same or different, for they appear to differ in many respects.

S. MATTHEW says that Christ ascended a mountain: S. LUKE, that He went up to pray.

S. MATTHEW does not speak of His having prayed, but taught: S. LUKE says that He spent the whole night in prayer.

S. MATTHEW does not say that after His prayer Christ called the disciples, and out of them chose the twelve Apostles; but he relates their election as if made long after (x. 2): S. LUKE does.

S. MATTHEW says that the sermon was held on a mountain: S. LUKE, on a plain, when Christ had come down from the mountain.

S. MATTHEW gives eight beatitudes, as they are called: S. LUKE, only four.

Hence some great authorities think that this sermon of S. Matthew and the other of S. Luke are not the same; but that Christ, according to His custom in different addresses, repeated the same things with only a few additions and alterations. S. Augustin was of this opinion (*De Consens.*, ii. 19), The Author (*Hom.* ix.), Chromatius (*in loc.*), and S. Gregory (*Hom.* ix. *on Ezekiel*).

Others think that the two sermons were the same, as Tatian (*Harm.*), S. Jerome (*Comment.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xv.), Origen (*Tract. on S. Matt.* xxiv.), Euthymius and Theophylact (*Comment.*). From their great authority I incline to think that these are correct; for each Evangelist relates the beatitudes, not as if they consisted of a few precepts repeated from some other sermon, but as if they contained the whole argument on which the sermon was constructed; and each so relates it as making the commencement from poverty.

The objection that they differ on many points is not so difficult of explanation as may be thought. S. Luke says that Christ went up into the mountain to pray: S. Matthew does not say this, but he does not contradict it; for he does not say why Christ went up, but what He did there; nor does he tell us all that He did, but only as much as He intended to do—this was to speak of Christ's doctrine. He is silent, therefore, about His praying, and enlarges upon the assembly.

For the same reason he passed over the calling of the Apostles, of which he spoke afterwards (x. 1); not keeping the order of events, as he often does, and as we have frequently explained to be his custom.

The difficulty is greater when S. Matthew says that Christ was on the mountain, and S. Luke that he was on a plain. But this also is answered by S. Augustin (*De Consensu*, ii. 19) in more ways than one.

It may have been, as both Evangelists say, that Christ went up into a mountain, though S. Luke alone says that He did so, to pray, and there chose the Apostles, as the same Evangelist alone describes, and He may then have come down—which S. Luke mentions, but S. Matthew omits—and have held the assembly, as both agree; except that S. Luke says that it was on a plain, and S. Matthew on a mountain.

This explanation seems to me very little probable, but his other still less so. It is that Christ did not come down from the mountain at all, but spoke from the top of it, on some level part, which S. Matthew calls the mountain, and S. Luke a plain. For this sermon does not seem to have been addressed to the whole multitude, but to the disciples alone; for (1) the subject-matter seems to imply and require us to believe this to have been the case, for Christ did not propose evangelical perfection to all the multitude, but He said to these, "Do penance" (iv. 17, and *S. Luke* xiii. 3, 5); but to those who desired to be perfect He offered perfection (xix. 21).

(2) Both Evangelists show that He addressed the disciples alone: "And when He was set down the disciples came to Him" (v. 1); S. Luke, "And He, lifting up His eyes on His disciples, said" (vi. 20, and *S. Matt.* v. 13, 14).

From this it is clear that the sermon was spoken, not on the plain, but on the mountain which the disciples ascended alone with Christ, leaving the multitude below. S. Matthew is not to be explained from S. Luke, but S. Luke from S. Matthew. S. Luke does not speak of the same ascent of the mountain as S. Matthew, but of another which He made that He might pray and choose the Apostles. What S. Luke adds of His having afterwards come down, that a great multitude followed Him; and that He lifted up His eyes and said, "Blessed are ye poor" (vi. 20), is not to be understood as having taken place immediately, and on the plain, but long after, and in another place; that is, on the mountain which He had ascended again, as S. Matthew says; but about which S. Luke is silent, as he did not conjoin the time and place.

That S. Matthew named eight beatitudes and S. Luke only four, is of slight consequence; for the Evangelist did not take in hand to relate all the events, but only the chief of them, and, therefore, in this case, S. Matthew relates

some things of which S. Luke makes no mention, and passes over others which S. Luke mentions; as those contraries: "Woe to you that are rich"; "Woe to you that laugh"; "Woe to you that are filled"; "Woe to you when men shall bless you".

And Jesus seeing.

The word *Jesus* is not found in the Greek, nor in Theophylact or Euthymius, and the connection of this verse with the last of the fourth chapter seems to make it a needless addition. But S. Chrysostom, The Author, S. Augustin, and S. Bernard read it.

The cause of Christ's having gone up into the mountain is not doubtful. He saw the multitude; but the reason of His having done so, because of it, is uncertain. The Author suggests that He might have gone up to teach them from a higher position as better adapted for speaking from; or He might have desired to escape the numbers, as S. Augustin (*Hom.* i. *de Serm. Dom.*), S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, and others suppose. Remigius observes that Christ had three kinds of refuge from the multitude—the desert (*S. Matt.* iv. 1), the ship (*S. Luke* v. 3), the mountain (as here, and xiv. 23; xv. 29; xvii. 1; *S. Mark* iii. 13; vi. 46; ix. 2; *S. Luke* vi. 12; ix. 28; xxi. 37; *S. John* vi. 3, 15; viii. 1). And this appears the true meaning, because, as has been said before, this address (*concio*) was not to the multitude, but to the Apostles; and Christ was accustomed to go up into the mountain, not to seek, but to escape from, the multitude (as in *S. John* vi. 3, 15; viii. 1).

What mountain it was which Christ ascended we cannot now know. S. Jerome says that some simple-minded persons in his day thought that it was the Mount of Olives; not observing that Christ was then in Upper Galilee, and that the Mount of Olives was near Jerusalem. He thinks himself that it might have been Tabor.

Verse 2. *And opening His mouth.*

This is not a mere pleonasm, as some think, but something of a mystery. S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*, l. i.), S. Gregory (*On Job*, iii. 5), think the meaning to be that Christ, who had before opened the mouths of the Prophets, now opened His own, as S. Paul says (*Heb.* i. 1). To open the mouth is sometimes to speak freely, and with a clear voice (*Ezek.* xxix. 21; *Ecclus.* xv. 5). Christ opened His mouth thus. This is true, but not enough. Sometimes to open the mouth is to break out into speech after a prolonged silence (as *Job* iii. 1).

Christ appears to have opened His mouth in this manner. Not that He had not spoken or addressed multitudes before, but that He had never before set forth His divine teaching on evangelical perfection. He now opened His mouth; that is, says S. Hilary, He revealed those divine mysteries on which He had before kept silence.

Verse 3. *Blessed.*

Christ begins with that for which all seek, as David, or whoever put his Psalms into a volume (*Ps.* i. 1). For not only is there no one who does not desire beatitude, but there is none who seeks anything but for it. Christ here calls those blessed who are so not in fact, but in hope, and who are ascending by the steps by which it is attained. For they are not called blessed as being certain of arriving at blessedness, but because they are going the right way to it, and will attain to it, if nothing hinder them. In one word, the poor are called blessed because, as such (*ex parte paupertatis*), they are light and unencumbered, as S. Gregory says, to run in the race for blessedness—unless disease or some sin hinder them.

Poor in spirit.

That is, humble (*humiles*), as most explain it—they who, even if rich in goods, are still humble in mind. Others

apply the words to those who, whether poor or rich, have not given up their minds to wealth, nor their hearts to where their treasure is, as S. Augustin often sets it out. Others again think that the actually poor are intended, as Tertullian (iv., *Against Marcion*), S. Cyprian, S. Jerome (*Comment.*). It would appear that this is the meaning—(1) because the Greek word πτώχος is used, which signifies not only poor men, but beggars, as Tertullian thought that it ought to be rendered; (2) because, in verse 4, it is said: "Blessed are the meek"; (3) because the kingdom of heaven is promised as riches to the poor; and (4) because S. Luke opposes the actually rich (*veros*), not the proud, to them: "Woe to you that are rich" (*S. Luke* vi. 24).

Why Christ added "in spirit" has been a matter of question. They who understand "the humble" think that it was not actual poverty, but lowliness of spirit, that was intended; for compulsory poverty is not a blessing, but a misery. This appears to be the true meaning, for spirit is often put for will (as *S. Matt.* xxvi. 41; *S. Mark* xiv. 3; *Rom.* i. 9; 1 *Cor.* vii. 34; *Ephes.* iv. 3).

Nor is all voluntary poverty to be understood, but that which is endured for the kingdom of heaven, or which is undertaken voluntarily, or which is borne patiently. S. Basil, therefore, explains "in" by "on account of" *spiritu, propter spiritum* (*Interrog.* 205 *in. Brev. Reg.*). A man poor in spirit is one who sells all he has, and gives to the poor, that, poor and naked himself, he might follow the poor and naked Christ.

This is the *first* step in evangelical poverty.

The *second* is that of those who have not indeed sold all their goods, but have given them up lest they lose Christ.

The *third* is of those who have not wholly given them up, but have left them to follow Christ and the Church.

The *fourth* is of those who, when they might be rich by unfair means, put the fear of God before perishable riches,

and prefer to be poor, saying, with Tobias: "We lead, indeed, a poor life, but we shall have many good things, if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is good" (iv. 23).

The *fifth* is of those who neither are, nor wish to be, rich, but seek their daily bread from God, and, having food and raiment, are therewith content.

The *sixth* is of those who wish, if they can without injustice, to be rich, but when they cannot, endure poverty with an even mind for Christ's sake. S. Ambrose (lib. vi., *In S. Luc.*) asks why Christ calls the poor blessed, when both riches and poverty are things indifferent, and, in themselves, neither good nor evil? His answer is, that Christ does not speak of poverty in itself, but of lowliness of spirit. Why did Christ begin with this when it is not a virtue at all, or, at least, not the greatest virtue? Christ wished to show the most direct and speedy way to heaven. But there is nothing which hinders this more than riches; for it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, and Christ therefore puts poverty in the first place.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

They who take the kingdom of heaven here to mean the preaching of the Gospel, because this is most especially promised to the poor—as in *S. Matthew* xi. 5; *Isaiah* lxi. 1; as the Hebrew reads it, "He hath sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor"—do not observe that the kingdom of heaven is opposed, as riches to poverty; as, in the words that follow, contraries are all opposed to contraries: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill".

Verse 4. *Blessed are the meek.*

This is the fifth verse in the Greek, and the fourth here, the fourth of the former answering to the fifth of our

version. S. Leo, in his *Hom. on all Saints*, reads as the Greek, so that it would appear as if the verses had been transposed in the Latin copies by the transcriber. "The meek are they who are humble and mild, and resemble Christ, who says, 'Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart' (*S. Matt.* xi. 29), and who cannot be otherwise than happy." S. Basil, in his *Shorter Rules, Interrog.* 191, says: "These are they who do not return evil for evil, but good for evil" (*Rom.* xii. 17, 18).

For they shall possess the land.

It has been questioned what land is here meant.

1. Some think it to be this earth on which we live—as S. Chrysostom (*Hom. in Matt.* xv.), Euthymius, and Theophylact; for Christ promises us not only heavenly and future, but also earthly and present goods (*S. Matt.* vi. 33; *S. Mark* x. 29, 30).

2. Some think it to be heaven which is called the land of the living—as in *Psalm* xxvi. 13; cxli. 6; Origen, *Hom.* xxvi. *on Numbers;* S. Basil, *On Psalm* xxxiii.; S. Cyril, *On Isaiah* lviii.; S. Greg. Nyss., *On Beatitudes;* S. Jerome, *in loc.* This opinion seems the more reasonable, because (1) in so grave a meeting as this, it is not likely that Christ would have promised that land which He always taught men to despise; (2) because, in the other beatitudes, He promises nothing of earth; (3) because the promise is not true; for the meek do not inherit this world, but are rather dispossessed of it; nor do they possess houses and lands who have left them for the Gospel; and Christ promises such to them even in this world (*S. Mark* x. 30); Christ, in truth, did not promise houses and lands, but spiritual gifts, which are better than these.

Why, however, did He call them houses and lands? He did it as in opposition to those which have been relinquished. But again, why does He not term them heaven rather than earth? For the sake of variety, for He had before called

them heaven (verse 3). He speaks thus to oppose to the earthly earth, if I may so speak, the heavenly, and to teach us that the meek, who are most excluded from the possession of this earth, shall have another and a better. S. Paul and S. John speak thus of the heavenly Jerusalem in opposition to the earthly, in the possession of which the Jews most especially delighted (*Galat.* iv. 16; *Heb.* xii. 22; *Apoc.* iii. 12; xxi. 2, 10). I know not whether Christ intended any allusion to the land of Canaan, which all the Israelites endeavoured to enter, but which only a few meek and patient did enter.

Verse 5. *Blessed are they that mourn.*

It is clear that not every mourner is blessed. We may rightly ask, therefore, to whom of them Christ gives this title? Some say that it is given to those who mourn for their sins (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xv.; S. Ambrose, iv., *In Luc.;* S. Cyril, v., *On Isaiah;* S. Hilary, *Can.* iv.). Others, to those who mourn, not only for their own sins, but for the sins of others also; as Christ mourned over Jerusalem (*S. Luke* xix. 41), and Samuel over Saul (1 *Kings* xvi. 1; The Author, *Hom.* ix.; S. Jerome, *Comment.;* S. Leo, *Serm. in Omn. Sanct.*). Others, again, suggest the mourners for the loss of property (S. Augustin, lib. i., *Serm. in Mont.;* S. Greg. Nyss., *De Beat. Potest.*). It may be that Christ means such as mourn for being persecuted for the kingdom of heaven, as in verse 10; so 2 *S. Tim.* iii. 12; *S. John* xvi. 33; *Rom.* v. 3, 4. That this is the meaning may be concluded from *S. Luke* vi. 25, where Christ opposes those who laugh to those who mourn—as oppressors to oppressed, conquerors to conquered.

For they shall be comforted.

They shall rejoice and laugh. The Greek is παρακληθήσονται, "shall receive consolation," as S. Augustin renders it. Our version, to represent a single Greek word

by another Latin one, speaks not according to the usage of this language. The above is what Christ said at the Last Supper (*S. John* xvi. 20; *Apoc.* vii. 17).

Verse 6. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.*

S. Luke says, absolutely, "Blessed are ye that hunger now, for you shall be filled". S. Matthew, by the addition of the word *justice*, has explained the passage, not as many think, but he has made it much more difficult. For from this word many have thought that we should understand a thirsting after, that is, an ardent desire of gaining righteousness, to be meant (S. Ambrose, *On S. Luke* vi.; S. Jerome, *Comment.;* S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xv.; The Author; S. Augustin, *Serm. in Mont.*, i.; S. Hilary, *Can.* iv.; S. Leo, *Serm. in Omn. Sanct.;* S. Greg. Nyss., *De Beat.;* S. Bernard, *Serm.* i. *Omn. Sanct.;* Euthymius and Theophylact, *Comment.*). Scripture appears to favour this idea, for by the word *thirst* it always means an ardent desire of a thing (*Ps.* xli. 1, 2, 3; xxvi. 2; *Eccles.* xxiv. 29; *Isaiah* lv. 1).

It seems more probable, however, that Christ spoke of actual hunger and thirst; for although vehement desire is often called thirst in Scripture, it is nowhere called hunger. But here not only they who thirst, but they also who hunger, are called blessed. Again, it appears to be so because Christ is speaking only of some sure and personal virtues which aid more than they appear to do to blessedness. Such are poverty, humility, patience. But to desire and seek after righteousness is not a special but a general virtue, and Christ would appear to have said nothing new or great if He called those who sought to be righteous "blessed". It is clear, too, that He desired throughout this whole sermon to oppose the opinion of the world in extolling those things which He held in especial contempt. He therefore praises poverty, humility, and patience.

The world, indeed, does not condemn, but approves the wish to be just, though itself unjust. But hunger and thirst it especially avoids, and thinks that the endurance of them is madness. Christ, therefore, speaks of these.

For they shall have their fill.

(*Ps.* xvi. 15; *S. Luke* xiv. 15; xxii. 29, 30.) By these words, which are used to accord with the common opinion that food and drink are great sources of happiness, the life of blessedness and the kingdom of heaven are signified, which, S. Paul says, are not meat and drink. A like saying is found in *Isa.* xlix. 10; lxv. 13; *Apoc.* vii. 17; *S. John* iv. 13, 14.

Verse 7. *Blessed are the merciful.*

This may be understood of every kind of mercifulness, as S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Theophylact point out. The parable in *S. Matthew* (xviii. 28-33) is a proof of the same. S. Greg. Nyss., S. Augustin (*Serm. in Mont.*), S. Leo (*Hom. de Omn. Sanct.*), think that the words should properly be understood of almsgiving; for this makes men truly blessed (*S. Matt.* xxv. 34, 35; *S. Luke* xvi. 9; *Ps.* xl. 1; cxi. 5; *Prov.* xiv. 21; xix. 17; *Job* iv. 7; *S. Matt.* xii. 2; *S. James* ii. 13). As these words were said to the Apostles, it appears that they who are not merely liberal in almsgiving (which the Apostles, who had left all, could not be) are properly called merciful, but much more they who easily forgive injuries, such as the Apostles were frequently compelled to undergo, as shown by the above parable (*S. Matt.* xviii.).

Verse 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart.*

Οἱ καθάροι τῇ καρδίᾳ—or, as S. Augustin and other Latin writers express it, "*mundicordes*," or "*puricordes*". Some think that they are meant whose consciences accuse them of no sin, and whom no consciousness of sin convicts (S.

Hilary, *Can.* iv.; S. Basil, *Reg. Brev.* 280; S. Greg. Nyss., *De Beat.;* S. Jerome, *Comment.;* The Author; S. Leo, *De Omn. Sanct.;* S. Bernard, *Serm. de Convers.*, chap. 25; and *Serm. de Omn. Sanct.*).

This view, however great its supporters, has its difficulties, for there is no one whose conscience does not accuse him of sin (*Prov.* xx. 9). Again, the above is not a personal but a general virtue, and, as we have said, Christ is speaking here of the former.

Some understand simplicity (S. Augustin, l. i., *De Serm. Dom.*). This appears the more reasonable because this grace is very little found in the world; as, in 1 *John* v. 19, "the whole world is seated in wickedness"; and because it was especially necessary to the Apostles, who were to take the world, not by cunning, but by simplicity. When Christ, therefore, sent them to preach, He inculcated upon them, first of all, simplicity (*S. Matt.* vi. 22; x. 16). God praised the simplicity of Job (i. 8). His wife, however, that is, the world and the wisdom of the flesh, derided him (ii. 9). Add that Christ promised the sight of God to the pure of heart, as promising sight to the blind: knowledge, and the most blessed knowledge, to the ignorant. For the world calls the simple blind and ignorant. The idea of S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact seems good. By purity of heart they understand chastity, for this grace also is scarcely known to the world (*S. Matt.* xix. 12), though Christ especially requires it of His disciples.

For they shall see God.

As they who have good sight discern colours best, so the pure of heart see God most perfectly. "Hence," says S. Augustin, "it follows that God is to be seen, not by the eyes of the body, but by the heart."

Verse 9. *Blessed are the peacemakers.*

By this expression many understand those who do not

cause dissensions. Others, those who readily forgive injuries, as S. Hilary, in his *Comment.;* S. Augustin, those who have peace in themselves, that is, who are agitated by no tempests of the conscience. Others still, which is akin to the former, those who are in no strife with God (S. Chrysostom, Euthymius). The Author and Theophylact say that the reference is to those who are at once men of peace themselves, and who, as far as in them lies, reconcile such as are at variance—who, in a word, study peace. This last explanation seems the best, because the Greek word *εἰρηνόποιοι* properly signifies those who reconcile enemies; and because the others are too general. For to have peace in ourselves and with God is a common grace, and the world makes more account of those who carry on war with courage and prudence than of those who study peace; and as this virtue was to be most especially inculcated upon the Apostles, who were to conquer the world, not by arms, but by peace. "Into whatsoever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house" (*S. Luke* x. 5). It follows: "They shall be called the sons of God"—that is, they shall be like God; a double Hebraism: one in the word "sons," which means, in Hebrew, resemblance in form, conformation—as below, verses 44, 45. The other is in the words "shall be called," that is, shall be: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (*Gen.* xxi. 12), which S. Paul explains by the verb substantive; and *Isaiah* lvi. 7; *S. Luke* xix. 46.

"To be called" (*vocari*) seems to mean more than "to be" (*esse*): for it signifies, so to be, as to be apparent, to be spoken of by all. The peacemakers therefore are blessed, because they will not only be the sons of God, but they will be sons in such a manner as that the world itself, which before held them fools, will be compelled to confess them to be the sons of God (*Wisdom* v. 3, 4); for it is the prerogative of God to make peace (1 *Cor.* xiv. 33); He is therefore called, *passim*, the God of Peace (*Rom.* xv. 33; xvi. 20, &c.).

The explanation of S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact is good: that the peacemakers are called the sons of God because they follow His Son Jesus Christ, whose office it is to reconcile men to God (*Rom.* v. 10; 2 *Cor.* v. 18; *Coloss.* i. 20; *Ephes.* ii. 14, 27); and who has brought a peace to the world which the world was not able to give (*S. Luke* ii. 14; *S. John* xiv. 27).

Verse 10. *For justice' sake.*

They are just because they follow justice, and are Christians (*Acts* v. 41; 1 *Peter* iv. 15, 16; ii. 20, 21; *S. Matt.* iii. 14).

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

To the patient as well as to the striving the kingdom is promised for their righteousness: a common consolation in Scripture (*Jerem.* xxxi. 16; 2 *Tim.* iv. 8; 1 *Cor.* xv.).

Verse 13. *You are the salt of the earth.*

There are two properties in salt: to give savour, and to preserve from corruption. What is termed savour in food (*sapor*) is wisdom in man, and expressed by the word salt. What is called in other things conservation (*conservatio*) is in men confirmation in good lives, and is termed in the inspired writings edification. The Apostles are called the salt of the earth, therefore, because they are men, and ought to teach by their wisdom, and edify by their lives. S. Augustin (i., *De Serm. Dom.*) shows why Christ spoke the above words. He had urged the Apostles before to the highest perfection of life: "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; and He desired to show that they ought to aim at being such, because they were the salt of the earth. By the earth here, S. Augustin says, men are to be understood. This is also certain from the custom of Scripture.

This is more necessary of observation because, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact have said, the Apostles were

called the salt of the earth, as about to be the masters, not of one man, or of a few men, but of the whole world (*S. Matt.* xiv. 15).

S. Mark (ix. 50) and S. Luke (xiv. 34) relate that on another occasion Christ used the same comparison. But it is an easy and probable conclusion that He did this, not once only, but frequently as the case required, as we often do in our teaching.

But if the salt have lost its savour.

Μωράνθη—Infatuatum fuerit: that is, loses its savour and sharpness. Doctors of the Church do this when they either teach wrongly or build up badly.

Wherewith shall it be salted?

That is, the salt itself (*S. Matt.* ix. 50); for there is no salting of salt. If the teacher teach amiss, by whom shall he be taught? If he live badly, by whom shall he be corrected? for there is no *doctor doctorum.* Not that the teacher cannot be corrected, but it is not usual nor easy.

But to be cast out.

To be trodden under foot by the passers-by, as things thrown out into the streets. It is a Hebraism. The Hebrew says אנשים "man" (*virum hominem*); the LXX., אנשי "each one"; the Latin, *vulgo conculcetur.* The meaning is that other things, even if they have lost their natural virtue, are still useful for other purposes. Gold money is broken up—it is no longer money, but it is still gold; it will not serve for commerce, but it is useful to the goldsmith. Food is tainted—it is not set before men, but it may be given to the dogs. A garment is worn out, it is thrown on to the dunghill—it will no longer warm men, but it will enrich the ground. But salt, if it has lost its savour, is useless for the dunghill, and will not manure the ground—nay, it

makes it sterile (*Ps.* cvi. 34; *S. Luke* xiv. 35). That which is of the most use, when decayed, becomes the most useless. The branch is most necessary for the production of fruit, but if it wither nothing is more valueless (*Ezek.* xv. 2, 3, 4).

Verse 14. *You are the light of the world.*

You who ought to enlighten the world by your doctrine and example; the world has no teachers of goodness but you. Christ probably meant by the three words—salt, light, and the city—to signify one and the same thing. This, as we learn from S. Jerome, was the custom of the Syriac, which was the language He used. Not only here, but in many other passages, we see Christ using many similes, one upon another, to express the same thing. Of this S. Matthew (xiii.) gives many examples. One thing must be observed, that Christ was the one only true Light "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" (*S. John* i. 9; iii. 19; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, 36).

Christ is called the true Light because He is the supreme Light in Himself, with whom, if not the Apostles alone and other holy men and Doctors, yet S. John the Baptist, than whom there was none greater among those born of women, may compare. But the other John said truly, he was not that light; yet of him the Evangelist writes: "He was a burning and a shining light" (v. 35). As in this passage of S. Matthew the Apostles are called the light, all Christians are called the same (*Philipp.* ii. 15; *Ephes.* v. 8; 1 *Thess.* v. 5). Christ is the Light by His own nature: others by His grace and gift, because they are enlightened by Him: Christ, because He lightens every man that cometh into the world, not only extrinsically by His example and doctrine, but also by His intrinsic grace: the Apostles, as lighting others, not only by their example, but also by their doctrine; Christians by their example.

A city cannot be hid.

The first part of the comparison is wanting. You are a city, or like a city, placed on a hill. S. Jerome shows that the Apostles and Prophets are the mountains, because, being on high places in the Church, they are seen by all. The Author also observes that they are described as towers (*Ps.* cxxi. 7), although the meaning here is a mystical one, the literal being different. In the same sense they are here compared to a state (*civitati*), or rather to a city (*urbi*).

"Cannot."—That cannot, you ought not to, be hidden. Christ does not admonish them to live uprightly lest they give offence, because their example, like a city on a hill, cannot be hid; but He warns them not to conceal themselves.

Verse 15. *Neither do men light a candle.*

The meaning of these words is clear. Their object is not—so S. Jerome thinks—that Christ uttered them to give the Apostles courage and confidence to preach the Gospel freely; as if one should exhort a champion to fight strenuously and with courage, because the eyes of all were upon him. Others think that He intended to warn them to live circumspectly, lest they should give offence—for a city set on a hill cannot possibly be hid.

Nor were they to resemble a candle put under a bushel, but one placed in a candlestick, which cannot but be seen by all (*S. Paul to the Philippians* ii. 15, and 1 *S. Peter* iii. 16). S. Chrysostom and Theophylact explain it thus:

Christ's meaning seems to be, to exhort the Apostles to shine brightly both by word and example, and not to spare their labour. Besides, He had kindled them as lights; that is, He had made them Apostles, and had therefore placed them above others, as a city on a hill, that they might be conspicuous, and shine, and teach, and not be hid. For a city is not built upon a mountain that it may not be

seen, nor is a candle lighted that it may be hid under a bushel, but that it may be placed in a candlestick, and light all, and be seen by all. Christ says this in other words (*S. Luke* ii. 49), and S. Paul exhorts S. Timothy "to preach the Word" (2 *Tim.* iv. 2). The words that follow—"So let your light shine"—confirm this opinion. The words "under a bushel" are put, probably, because a bushel was very fit for concealing the light. So *S. Luke* viii. 16.

Verse 16. *So let your light shine.*

Christ elsewhere seems to teach the contrary (vi. 1, 2, 5), and many things in that place to the same purport. The answer is easy. The word "that" in this instance does not show the cause, but the result, as in *S. John* ix. 39 and 1 *Cor.* xi. 19. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* x. *on Romans;* xxvii. *on* 1 *Cor.*, and on S. Paul's words, "There must be heresies"), John Damascene, with other authorities of the Greek Church, say that the word is not *αἰτιατικόν* but *ἐπιβατικόν*; not causative, but illative. For Christ did not command the Apostles to act rightly that they might be seen by men, which chapter vi. forbids; but so to live that every one who saw their actions might glorify, not them, but their Father who is in heaven, and of whose grace it was that they did them. This is not forbidden in that 6th chapter of *S. Luke.*

Is it not lawful, then, ever to do good that we may be seen by men, when we should not otherwise do it? It is lawful if only we do it not for our own sakes, but for the sake of God. It is lawful with that object, but not as the final object to do good. It is lawful to come thither, but not to remain there; our minds must lead on to the glory of God. Before they came to God they stood still; nay, they fell. He who wishes to be seen by men when well-doing, wishes it not that he himself, but that his Father in heaven may be glorified—he wishes, not himself, but God

to be seen. For no one wishes to be seen by men that he may merely be seen, but that he may be given some glory by being seen. If he seek not glory, or if he seek it not for himself, but for God, even if he desire to be seen, he does not appear to desire it. In this sense S. Peter wishes Christians who live righteously to desire to be seen by the Gentiles (1 *Pet.* ii. 12). In this sense Christ seems to have said: "Let your light so shine". In this passage the word "that" signifies, not only the event and consequence, but the end and cause. He compared the Apostles to a candle; but the candle is lighted that it may be seen, and, as we have said, Christ does not there proceed as by leaps, but gradually: "Glorify your Father who is in heaven".

Verse 17. *Do not think.*

We must first see to what end Christ said this, and how far it agrees with His previous words. Many think that Christ said this because He had been already accused by the Jews of being about to destroy the Law, or because He certainly knew that he would be so accused, which we see to have subsequently happened (*S. Matt.* vii. 29; xv. 9; and *S. John* ix. 16).

Some think that, because Christ had already made transition to a more perfect interpretation of the Law, He desired to advise them that they must understand even from this that He was not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it; that is, to bind them more closely to it, and interpret it more perfectly to the mind of the Giver of it (verses 21, 22). So say S. Chrysostom and Theophylact. The Author, whoever he was, seems to have touched the true case (*Hom.* x.). Christ had said to the Apostles: "You are the light of the world," which should be explained, as we have said, at once of their life and doctrine. He teaches them now, by His own example, how they ought to live and teach; that they ought to keep the Law

better than it had been kept heretofore, and explain it better than the Scribes and Pharisees, lest they should think that because they were the disciples of Christ, that is, of the Lawgiver Himself, they might break the Law; as they who are of princes' households are used to be free from almost every law. As if He had said: I Myself, who made the Law, am not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it; and "unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (verse 20). Thus precept follows precept.

Now we will speak of the meaning of the words. How does Christ say that He is not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it, when, in fact, He did destroy and abrogate it? For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John (*S. Matt.* xi. 13; *Heb.* vii. 12), and therefore Christ is contrary to the Law, and cannot profit those who keep the Law (*Gal.* v. 2.).

They who reply that "Christ said that He was not come to destroy the Law because, although He would destroy it, He would not do so *per se*, but by the Apostles after His return into heaven; as He said that He came not but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (*S. Matt.* xv. 24)—not that He did not come to other sheep, but that He would bring in those sheep not *per se* but by the Apostles"; do not appear to see to what end Christ said this. He wished, as before said, to urge the Apostles to keep the Law perfectly, inasmuch as He Himself had come not to destroy but to fulfil it. In the same way, then, in which He Himself had kept it, He wished the Apostles to keep it; and in the way in which He abrogated it, He abrogated it not by the Apostles, but *per se*. The true meaning, then, is this. Christ came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it:

1. Because as long as the Law had need to flourish, He, though as God He was bound by no Law, both fulfilled it most strictly Himself, and took care that the Apostles

should do the same. Both He Himself and the Apostles were circumcised. They went up yearly to the feast and kept Paschal. As to the accusation that He did not keep the Sabbath because the disciples plucked the ears of corn (*S. Matt.* xiii. 1, 2) and ate with unwashed hands (xv. 2), these were calumnies of the Pharisees, who interpreted the Law not according to the intention of the Giver, but according to their own will and tradition, as Christ convicts them of doing in these passages.

2. He is said not to have destroyed but fulfilled the Law, because He interpreted it by His righteous interpretations. For when He said, "I am not come to destroy," as if wishing to show how He fulfilled it, He added those more severe interpretations of it in verses 21, 22, 23, 24. So say S. Greg. Nyss. (*Cont. Jud.*), Euthymius, and Theophylact (*in Comments.*).

3. Christ fulfilled the Law, because He gave us the grace by which it could be fulfilled. For previously, as S. Augustin says, "He commanded, but He did not assist"; after His coming, He both commands and assists. Before this it was a heavy body, a weight without a soul. He infused into it the grace and spirit, like a soul by which it is moved and acts, as in *S. John* i. 17; S. Augustin (*Cont. Faust.*, xi. 5; xix. 7); S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xvi.).

4. He showed forth the promises of the Law, and represented what had been shadowed forth by the ceremonies and types. So almost all the ancient authors interpret it—S. Irenæus, iv. 27, 67; Tertullian, *De Patient.*; S. Hilary, iv.; S. Athanasius, *Cont. Omn. Haeres.*; S. Cyril, *De Adorat.*; S. Augustin, *Quæst. 69 in Nov. Test.* In accordance with these are the words of Christ (*S. Luke* xxiv. 44). That is, as the Evangelists, and most especially S. Matthew, say, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets".

5. Some add a fifth way in which Christ fulfilled the

Law—that for its temporal rewards and punishments He substituted eternal ones. And thus, as there were in the Law and the Prophets four parts—(1) Promises and Prophecies, (2) Precepts of the Decalogue, (3) Ceremonies, (4) Judgments—Christ fulfilled all. The Promises and Prophecies, by showing what was promised and what foretold; the Moral Precepts of the Decalogue, by a better interpretation; the Ceremonies, by showing their signification: as, for Circumcision of the flesh, Baptism and Circumcision of the heart; the Judicial, by the change of corporeal and temporal rewards and punishments into spiritual and eternal.

This is how He abrogated the Law: not by destroying, but by fulfilling; not by violating, but by perfecting: "As a painter," says Theophylact, "who puts the finishing touches, and adds the colour to a picture which he has begun, but only sketched in outline, destroys the first draft and produces a new one". He destroys indeed, not by dissolving but by completing: not by blotting out.

In what sense the Law is said to have lasted only until the time of John the Baptist is another question, and one not to be explained here, but in Chap. xi. It is sufficient now to know that the Law lasted only to John Baptist, not because it was abrogated by him, nor immediately. When he began to preach it began to sicken, and it was to die not long after the death of Christ. The Law was abrogated because it was perfected by the Gospel. When the Gospel began to be preached, it began to be abrogated; and the more the Gospel flourished, the more the Law declined; and when the Gospel was fully preached, the Law was fully done away.

Verse 18. *Amen.*

אמן in Hebrew signifies truth (*Isa.* lxv. 16). Thus, "Amen, I say unto you" is the same as "I say to you in

truth" (*S. Luke* iv. 25; *S. John* xvi. 27). The word has a twofold meaning—one of confirmation of what was said before, as *Deut.* xxvii. 26, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 16; the other, as an affirmation of what is about to be said, as in this place and in others innumerable. The former is more frequently found in the Old Testament, seldom in the New Testament. The latter is met with abundantly in the New Testament, seldom or never in the Old Testament. The reason seems to be, that the writers of the Old Testament used the Hebrew and not the Syriac language, and in Hebrew, אמן "Amen," is rather a word of confirmation than of affirmation. The Greek and Latin versions followed the Hebrew as from common use.

Until pass.

Until they perish (*Ps.* ci.), until they be dissolved (1 *Pet.* iii. 10), until they be changed. A Hebraism עבר often found in the New Testament; παρερχέσθαι is used in *S. Matthew* (xxiv. 35; xxvi. 39, 42), *S. Mark* (xiii. 31), *S. Luke* (xxi. 33); as is παραφέρειν for Hithpael fol. העביר Hiphil 8vo, *S. Mark* (xiv. 36), *S. Luke* (xxii. 42), and μετατιθέσθαι (*Heb.* vii. 12).

Heaven and earth.

The whole world, which is believed to stand on the firmest foundations. "Heaven and earth, the chiefest of the elements, as is supposed, are to pass away, but the least particle even of the commandments of the Law cannot be annulled" (S. Hilary). Scripture elsewhere uses similar comparisons (*Ps.* li. 5, 7; lxxxviii. 38; *Jer.* xxxiii. 20, 21).

One jot or one tittle.

Some explain it that Iota is the least of all the letters, and the top is the least part of it. As if we should say: "Not even the very least commandment of the Law, or the

least part of the least commandment, can be destroyed". But this explanation has no place in the Greek or Hebrew in which this Gospel was written, nor in the Syriac in which Christ spoke; because the Iota has no top. Christ, then, calls the apex or tittle the least part of the letter, as the head or tail of Iod, a thing most minute; for everyone is aware that there were no points in Hebrew in those times. The letter Iota from this passage, although the least of all the letters, caused the greatest of all the heresies (Irenæus, i. 3).

Verse 19. *Of these least commandments.*

Some ancient authorities would have the cross and death of Christ to be intended, because, although they seem a small thing, no man has any safety who is ashamed of them. Thus S. Hilary, and others mentioned by Theophylact. But it is not clear that the cross is meant, and it is doubtful which may be termed the least of the commandments of Christ. Some, like S. Augustin (*Serm.* i., *Dom. in Mont.*), refer to the precontext, as if it had been said: "Whosoever shall break one of the least of these My commandments, which I have come not to destroy, but to fulfil". The word "these" seems to support this view. Others think that the reference is to what follows, as S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Theophylact. It more probably means the least of the commandments of the Old Testament, which were ceremonial and judicial, and which Christ would not allow to be kept after the Gospel, but abolished, and because the text continues: "Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees," &c. (verse 20). The word "these," then, does not refer to the same things as Christ had spoken of, but to like ones—like, because each appeared to be the least.

Christ calls the commandments of which He was about to speak "the least," not because they were so in reality,

but only in the opinion of the Pharisees, who thought them the least, or rather nothing at all. These, as depending entirely on the judgment of men, thought murder, which is a visible act, a sin, but the desire to perpetrate it, which they could not see, they, perhaps, thought no sin.

And shall so teach men.

The word "so" is a single syllable, but it contains a great difficulty, and upon it turns the meaning of the whole sentence. S. Jerome and others think that it means "as I teach and command," as if Christ had said: "Whoever does not keep one of the least of these commandments, although he teach others that they are to be kept, shall be the least in the kingdom of heaven". With this agree the words of Christ (xxiii. 2, 3). S. Jerome thought that the same Scribes and Pharisees were meant. But this explanation seems less applicable here, because Christ blames not only the life, but also the doctrine of the Pharisees (*S. Matt.* v. 21). The opinion of all the other authorities seems better—"so," that is, as he who does not keep them himself, and teaches others that they need not —S. Chrysostom (*Hom. in Matt.* xv.), The Author, S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*, i.), S. Gregory (bk. xix., *On Job*).

Shall be called the least.

Some explain "the least" by "no one"—*minimum nonnulli* nullum *interpretantur*—as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact, because, probably, they thought it a senseless thing that he who does not keep the commandments of Christ may still have some place in the kingdom of heaven, because he has not broken the great commandments, but only the least, the infraction of which is venial.

This explanation is answered by the fact that what Christ called, as in the opinion of the Pharisees, the least, were in truth the greatest. For he who does not commit

murder, but has the desire to do so, and he who does not commit adultery, but who looks upon a woman to lust after her, because his righteousness does not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The whole meaning of this passage depends on what is understood by "the kingdom of heaven," which shall be explained hereafter. Meanwhile, the words "the least" may be taken as equivalent to "the last"—*i.e.*, someone. Lest the force of the words carefully used by Christ should be lost, He said that such an one should be the last—the last, but still someone—because he broke the least of the commandments, using a forcible paranomasia. He said "he shall be *called*," because he shall *be*, as in verse 9—unless we explain it by "shall be pronounced," shall be declared by the sentence of Christ the Judge, by which everyone shall appear what he is.

In the kingdom of heaven.

S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*, i.) and S. Gregory (*Moral.* xix. 5), and almost all others, say that in this place the Church is meant by the kingdom of heaven: lest, if the actual kingdom of heaven be understood, a contradiction follows—that whoever breaks one of these commandments should have a place in the kingdom of heaven, when Christ almost immediately adds: "Unless your justice abound". S. Chrysostom and Theophylact explain it apparently better, considering it to mean the time of the Resurrection, and the last day, and the day of Judgment. Then, whoever has not kept one of these least commandments shall be called: that is, declared by the sentence of the Judge, the least. Such an one will not be in no place, because he will rise again and be judged; but he will be in the last place, for he will be cast out into outer darkness.

Some ask why Christ makes no mention of those who neither do nor teach the great commandments; and of those

who teach, but do not; and of those who do, but teach not; and of those who teach the least, and do not; or of those who do, and teach not.

The sole question was of the Pharisees alone, who did not that which they thought the least, and who taught men not to do them. If, then, he who has not kept one of the least of these commandments shall be in the last place, that is, shall be called the least, where shall he be who has not kept the greater? He also shall be in the last place. There they will, therefore, be equal and unequal—equal, as each will be last, each in the last place, which is hell; unequal, for in that last place, as in the first, which is the kingdom of heaven, there will be many mansions, and some will be tormented with a greater punishment than others. They who are in the first place, that is, the kingdom of heaven, will also be equal as being all to receive the same power (*S. Matt.* xx. 10); and unequal, because "In my Father's house there are many mansions" (*S. John* xiv. 2), and because "Star differeth from star in glory" (1 *Cor.* xv. 42). Equal in the kind of honour, unequal in the degree; as all kings are equal in dignity, but unequal in wealth and power.

Verse 20. *For I tell you.*

Christ gives the reason why He said: "He that shall break one of these least commandments"—as if to break these, and not to abound in righteousness more than the Scribes and Pharisees, were the same thing.

Unless (your justice) abound.

The Greek is ἐαν μὴ πιστεύσησῃ, the Hebrew צדקתכם. "Your justice," that is, your observation of the Law, which Christ Himself calls justice, because, by our observance of the commands of God, we are justified.

Than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

These teach that these commandments are of the least consequence. Christ mentions the Scribes and Pharisees because they were Doctors of the Law, and accounted much more holy than other men.

Verse 21. *You have heard.*

We cannot understand what follows hence and to the end of the chapter, unless we first understand that on which there have been many questions—*Whether Christ added anything to the ancient Law*, or *only to the interpretation of the Pharisees*, when He said: "For I tell you" (v. 20).

All the heretical teachers take it for granted—the Holy Spirit, I suppose, revealed it to them—that Christ was correcting not the Law, but the Traditions and Interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees, and they revile those Ancients who thought otherwise. The Pelagians did the same of old, as S. Jerome informs us in his Book I. against them.

It cannot be denied that there are some plausible reasons to be alleged for this view. 1. It may be observed that the word "It was said" is repeated at every fresh command, as if Christ had said it was "said" and not written, because He was speaking not of the Law but of the Traditions and Explanations of the Pharisees. 2. That Christ objects to them as perverse interpreters, though in no way intending to oppose a good lawgiver to the ancient one, whether He Himself or the Father gave the ancient Law to Moses. Besides, what Christ added in this place was contained in the ancient Law. For not only was Adultery but also Concupiscence forbidden by the old Law (*Exod.* xx. 17), as S. Paul is witness (*Rom.* vii. 7). Christ, therefore, did not add anything to the Law, but He added His own interpretation to that of the Pharisees.

Again, the Law did not command them to hate their enemies, but rather to love them (*Exod.* xxiii. 4). Again,

when the young man asked Christ "What shall I do?" (*S. Luke* xviii. 18), the answer merely was, "Keep the Commandments". Nothing, therefore, that Christ added was wanting in the Commandments of the Law. Lastly, no perfection in the Gospel is or can be greater than to love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and this very thing is commanded in *Deut.* vi. 5.

What Christ added, he added in verse 20: "Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees"—as if He had said: "I desire not to correct the Law, but the Interpretation of the Pharisees". For Christ declares that many things were said by them of old time which are not found in the Law, as in verse 21: "He shall be in danger of the judgment," and verse 33: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself," and verse 43: "Thou shalt hate thine enemies".

The Ancients saw, and with incredible unanimity taught, that Christ corrected the ancient Law by adding what was wanting to all evangelical doctrine. Not that the Law was not perfect in its kind, but that it was less perfect than the Gospel; for it had been a schoolmaster to the Jews, as to children who must be taught their elements—until a better master, Christ Himself, proposed a better teacher to minds now, by time, more perfect. In this manner, besides others (of which see verse 18), Christ fulfilled the Law because He added what was wanting to it. So say S. Irenæus (iv. 27), Tertullian (*De Patientia*), S. Clement (*Alex. Strom.*, vi.), S. Hilary (*Can.* vi. *in Matt.*), S. Epiphanius (*Cont. Ptol. Her.*, xxxiii.), S. Basil (*Hom. Ps.* xiv.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xvi. *in Matt.*), The Author (*Hom.* xi.), S. Ambrose (*Serm.* v. *on Ps.* cxviii.), S. Jerome to Gerontius (*De Monogam Chromatius*), Theophylact (*Comm., in loc.*). Their conclusion appears sound, not only from their great authority, but from the force of their arguments.

As the heretics rely upon the words "It was said," we may, on the other hand, rest upon what follows: "them of old," that is, those to whom Moses gave the Law; Christ opposing to the followers of Moses and men under the Law, Christians and disciples of the Gospel: "But I say to you".

If Christ had only been alluding to the Traditions and Interpretations of the Pharisees, He would not have said "You have heard"—as if they had not heard it from Him who spoke, but had received it from others who had heard it. But He said simply: "You have heard, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment". Nor would He have spared the words "Scribes and Pharisees" if blaming them, but He would have said plainly: "You have heard from the Scribes and Pharisees". For we always find Him practising this freedom, as "Beware of the leaven" (*S. Matt.* xvi. 6, 11, 12). Nor could He have called those who lived just before "them of old"; and the Pharisees were not long before Christ, as we learn from Josephus. Again, Christ here corrected much which, as appears, was not introduced by the Pharisees, but expressed in the Law, such as the words (verse 31): "Whosoever shall put away his wife" (*Deut.* xxiv. 1). What, then, had the Pharisees corrupted here? Yet Christ corrected it (verse 49 and verse 33): "Thou shalt not forswear thyself". For the Law said: "Thou shalt not swear falsely by My name". The Pharisees did not corrupt this either. For, as to the saying that the Pharisees affirmed that there was no swearing by heaven or earth, we have answered that on verse 33. That Christ blamed the Pharisees for saying: "Whosoever shall swear by the Temple," &c. (*S. Matt.* xxiii. 16), is a different thing. Christ did not blame theirs as a false interpretation of the Law. If He had wished to do this, He would have done it in that place and not in this. For the Law did not forbid men to swear by the

Temple; Christ first forbade it. But He blamed their covetousness, by which they absolved from their oath those who swore by the Temple, but condemned those who swore by the gold of it, as if they were influenced by the gold rather than by the honour of God.

Where, again, does the Law say: "If one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him also the other"? or, what fault was it of the Pharisees, because, when the Law did not say this, they did not so explain it, when we ourselves can scarcely receive it even on the word of Christ Himself? Where is it written that "to him who would take away our coat, we should give our cloak also"? Christ, then, not only explains the Law, but makes a new one: introduces a new doctrine. Where, too, does the Law say: "Love your enemies"? The words of *Exod.* xxiii. 4 are nothing to the purpose, for they speak of a Jew who was forbidden to have a suit against another Jew. He, therefore, who is there called an enemy is termed a brother in *Deut.* xxii. 1. But when they speak of true enemies, they command us not only to hold them in detestation, but even to destroy them (*Deut.* xxv. 19). Under the Gospel it is forbidden to hate anyone, or to put anyone to death by private power. Lastly, we here see Christ enlarging the rewards and punishments of the Old Law. Why so, except that He increased the perfection of the Law?

Shall be in danger of the judgment.

It has been observed from the Talmud that there were *three Tribunals* among the Jews. The first consisted of three judges, who took notice of lesser cases. The second of twenty-three, who decided greater, and even capital ones. The third, of seventy-one chosen men, who decided the most weighty questions, especially public ones, as those of peace or war, of false prophets, of the High Priest. The first was called שופט the Judgment; the second, רב the

Sanhedrim (or "Concessus"), the term used by the Greeks; the third, the great "Concessus". The account of the triple tribunals is correct, but that of the titles and cognisance of causes is not wholly so. For it is clear, from this passage, that the trial of questions of life or death pertained to the Judgment, as a murderer was called a criminal of the Judgment, so that either capital causes were settled in the first tribunal, or, as is more likely, both the first and second tribunals were called Sanhedrim. Christ's words seem to confirm this opinion, when He subsequently spoke of the Sanhedrim as if it were the highest court of all, and it were that to which all final appeals should be made, so that, having no other to name beside it, He could only proceed from it to speak of the fire of Gehenna.

Authorities are not agreed as to the meaning of being in danger of the council (*reus judicii*). Some say that the reference is to one who would claim to have his cause tried in the council, as S. Augustin (i., *Serm. in Mont.*), S. Gregory (xii., *On Job*). Others more correctly, as Euthymius and the poet Juvencus, take it of those who were subject to capital punishment, passed upon them by the "Judgment". This view seems preferable, because the punishment for murder was not inflicted at the will of the judges, but was appointed by the Law, and the judges had no power to alter it (*Levit.* xxiv. 21; *Numb.* xxxv. 16, 17, 30); and because Christ appears to have designed to show that one who committed murder only in will was worthy, under the Gospel, of no less a punishment than an actual murderer under the Law; so that the lightest punishment of the Gospel was equal to the heaviest of the Law: that is, a capital one. Where is it written in the Law: "He shall be in danger of the council"? Christ did not cite the words of the Law, but the meaning, and it was written, as before observed, that a murderer should die.

Verse 22. *Whosoever is angry.*

Not all anger is sin, for not only other holy men, but S. Paul (*Acts* xxiii. 3), S. Peter (*Acts* viii. 20), and Christ Himself (*S. Matt.* xv. 7; xxii. 18; xxxiii. 1, 13, 14, 15, 23, 39) seem to have been angry. Some Greek copies read εἰκῇ, without a cause. This has caused it to be said that not all anger, but only that which is unjust, and without cause or reason, is sin; and that Christ and the Apostles were angry indeed, but not without cause. This reading is adopted by S. Irenæus (v. 27), S. Justin (*Epistle to Zenas and Serenus de vit. Christ.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* vii.), the Author (*Hom.* ii.), S. Augustin (*Serm. Dom.*), Theophylact and Euthymius (*In Comment.*). But our version does not contain the words, and S. Jerome seems to reject it. 1. Because it is not true. For as no one is permitted, even for a just reason, to put a man to death himself, so may no one, even justly, be angry. 2. Because, granting it to be true, Christ did not say so here. Nor was this a fit place to moderate, by such addition, the sentiment in question, when Christ especially intended to exaggerate the sin of anger. 3. If moderation were to be shown at all, it would rather have been shown on the words of the preceding verse: "Thou shalt not kill," than on those of being angry, because it is a heavier offence to kill than to be angry without a cause. It is said that to be angry with reason is nothing, to be so without it is venial. But Christ says that to be angry thus is to be "in danger of the judgment"; that is, of capital punishment, which a venial sin certainly does not merit.

The question may be settled thus: Christ speaks with accommodation as regards homicide, of which he is treating; and he calls anger not every seeking for revenge, as defined by the philosophers, but that anger properly so-called, which tends to murder. He designed to say that not only he who had committed murder in fact, but also he

who had only committed it in will, was in danger of the judgment: as He says, in verses 27, 28, that not only he who has committed adultery in fact, but also he who has only done so in will, is guilty of the sin. He therefore calls the wish to kill, anger, which, whether with or without cause, can never be in any individual person without a most grievous sin. Nor were Christ or the Apostles ever angry in this sense. For when it is said that S. Peter killed Sapphira in anger (*Acts* v. 9), we believe that he acted not from anger, but from religion—not as a private person, but as a minister of God.

Shall be in danger of the judgment.

Of eternal death, which Christ calls the judgment, that He may speak in accordance with the custom of the Jews, who called him who was worthy of death חיב משפט or, "In danger of the judgment". They speak of the death of the body, Christ of the death of the soul. Christ, indeed, augments the punishment of sinners, not by increasing, but by declaring it. Nor does he, therefore, make the yoke of the Gospel heavier than that of the Law. For He neither increases sins by this, though declaring them to be greater than was supposed by the Law, nor threatens greater punishments for lighter offences; but, having shown the greatness of the sins, He showed that the punishments would be greater than they appeared. Nay, He deals much more lightly; for, although He shows the sins more clearly, He cures them when shown. The Law showed them less; it cured them in no manner (*Rom.* viii. 3).

And whosoever shall say to his brother, "Raca".

Ignorance of the Hebrew has caused various explanations of this passage. Some authors of weight—S. Chrysostom and Theophylact—say that *Raca* in Syriac is the same as *Tu* in Latin, and that it means no more than a rude and

disrespectful address—as we say to our servant: "Get you gone". Euthymius agrees, except that he makes it a Hebrew, not a Syriac word. This is not to be wondered at in Greek writers, who had no knowledge of Hebrew; but it is not therefore to be hastily received, for we know that there is no such pronoun either in Hebrew or Syriac.

S. Augustin was told by a Jew, whom he consulted on the subject, that the word was not a substantive, but an interjection of anger, like the Latin "Hem". This may be so, but what others have said appears more probable, that ריקא is a Chaldæan or Syriac word, derived from the Hebrew ריק. For ריק in Hebrew means a light and inconstant person (*Judges* xi. 3; 2 *Kings* vi. 20; 2 *Paralip.* xiii. 7). Hence, a man of very little judgment was called, as we have said, by the Talmudists ריקא *raca*—which means properly one who is vain and empty: who, although in appearance closely resembling a fool, differs from him in being light, inconstant, and, in the Latin, *levis*. This meaning agrees well with the context. For Christ certainly intended to distinguish *three* degrees of sin and punishment, of which the *second* was greater than the first, and the *third* than the second. The first is anger, not breaking out into words; the second the utterance of an insolent expression, in which the brother is called ריקא *raca*, *levis;* the third still more insulting, in which he is termed "fool" (*fatuus* or *stultus*). As to the translators not having rendered the word, this was probably not because it was an interjection, for even these are sometimes translated, as אהה הנה (*Jer.* i. 6; xiv. 13; *Ezek.* iv. 14, 20; xx. 49; *Joel* i. 15): but either because it was in such common use that to have translated it would have been to weaken its force and meaning: as if we rendered "Amen"; or, that not being sufficiently certain as to its meaning they would not cause a difficulty to the reader. This, as

we have said, was a not uncommon practice with the LXX. and the Latins did the same.

Shall be in danger of the council.

The third tribunal—the Council or Sanhedrim : this may be termed either a council (*concilium*) or a deliberation (*consilium*), literally a session (*concessus*). By the council Christ means the capital sentence passed by it, as in verse 22, by which is to be further understood the everlasting death of the soul. But, as we said before, Christ spoke in accordance with the custom of the law.

It may be asked how Christ understands capital punishment by the "judgment" and council when He clearly designed to distinguish *three* degrees of punishment? He designed the degrees and not the kinds. For either tribunal could pass a capital sentence, but the sentence of the Judgment was generally lighter, that of the Council more heavy, as men of greater weight sat in the latter, and causes of greater weight were brought before it.

It is well known that there were *four* methods of capital punishment among the Jews—strangulation, the sword, stoning, and burning—as is found in the Book סקללים. So Christ tells us that he who is angry and he who calls his brother raca (*levis*), and he who calls him a fool, is deserving of the same punishment of hell, but not of the same degree of punishment.

Many, as S. Chrysostom says, wonder that one who calls his brother raca, or a fool, should be condemned to eternal death when men so often *(tertio quoque verbo)* use that expression one to another. But (1) the habit of sin ought not to cause wonder at its punishment, for we do not wonder that they who swear rashly are punished. Why is it so visited? The habit ought to increase, not lessen, the punishment; for it does not lessen, but increase, the fault. Again, not everyone who is angry and calls his brother

raca, or a fool, is immediately damned ; but he who is angry and calls him by that name, in such a manner as by degrees to ascend to murder. For Christ speaks of them not as from their feeling and the force of their words, but as from the beginning of murder in their hearts. "You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill. But I say to you" (verses 21, 22). Not everyone, then, who calls his brother "fool" in sport or in sudden anger, without any thought of murder or wish to utter a severe contumely, is at once held guilty of eternal death.

Shall be in danger of hell-fire.

Gehennon, that is, the Valley of Gennon, as Ben Ennon is the son of Ennon. It was a pleasant place, and was watered by streams from the fountain of Siloë, near Jerusalem, at the foot of Mount Moriah, according to the description of S. Jerome ; and as we learn from *Joshua* xv. 8 ; xviii. 16, it was also called גיהנם the Valley of Hennon, from its owner. Here, either because it was a pleasant spot or because it had a wicked owner, the worship of Moloch took place, the chief idol of the Ammonites, whom some think to have been Saturn ; and here, by a cruel rite, infants were burnt (4 *Kings* xvi. 3 ; xvii. 17-31 ; xxiii. 10 ; 2 *Paralip.* xxviii. 3 ; xxxiii. 6). It was afterwards called Tophet (4 *Kings* xxiii. 10 ; *Isaiah* xxx. 33 ; *Jerem.* vii. 31, 32 ; xix. 6, 11, 12, 13), from the rite, as some think, of sacrificing there, because while the infants were being burnt drums were beaten, that the parents might not hear their cries and be distracted with affliction ; for a drum is called תף (*Gen.* xxxi. 27) in Hebrew. Hence hell is called Gehenna, because the condemned are consumed in it by unquenchable fire. It was probably so called in the time of Christ ; for He uses the word as commonly known, although, as S. Jerome says on *Matt.* x., we do not find it in any of the sacred writers before Him. Christ adds the

word fire, both to show the nature of the punishment, and to make allusion to the most heavy of all the penalties among the Jews—the burning to death, mentioned before—when in other places He merely calls it Gehenna (verse 30, chap. x. 28; xxiii. 15, 33; *S. Mark* ix. 43; *S. Luke* xii. 5).

Verse 23. *If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar.*

Christ commands us, even if we have commenced any act very especially pleasing to God, to leave it and be reconciled to our brother; for God would have mercy and not sacrifice (*Osee* vi. 6; *S. Matt.* ix. 13), and He prefers in us the love of our neighbour to the love of ourselves.

And there thou remember.

The word "there" (*ibi*) has, in this instance, a peculiar force—"there" at the very altar itself, standing before God.

Not only by the Jews, but by other nations also, it was considered an act of great wickedness to leave a sacrifice uncompleted. Valerius (iii. 3) praised a youth because, when he was holding the censor to Alexander, who was offering sacrifice, he suffered his arm to be burnt off rather than be guilty of interrupting the sacrifice.

Hath anything against thee.

The sense seems to require "if thou remember that thou hast anything against thy brother". If my brother have anything against me—that is, if he hate me, not I him—he must be reconciled to me, not I to him. Some—*e.g.*, Euthymius—think that the words require a mutual action (*vicissitudinem*), as if Christ had said: "And thou remember there that thy brother hath anything against thee, and thou against him". Others that a higher perfection is inculcated, and that Christ willed that not only when we harm others, but when we are harmed by them, we should leave the sacrifice and first seek reconciliation. But S. Chrysostom (*Hom.*

xviii.), The Author, S. Augustin, and S. Jerome more rightly conceive that to have anything against us means to have any just cause of complaint, as having received some injury from us, as S. John in the *Apocalypse* (ii. 4). He commands us, therefore, first to satisfy for the injury, then to offer our sacrifice, and, when our brother is first appeased, to appease God afterwards. They refer the words to those which Christ had spoken before, "Raca," &c., as if He had said: "If you remember to have called your brother raca or fool, or to have done him any other injury, leave there your gift before the altar and go and be first reconciled to your brother". "This, however," as S. Augustin says, "is not to be understood as if we ought always to be going to our brother"—a holy counsel truly, and also, when love requires it, a necessary precept. But we ought more frequently to be guided by our feelings and acts (*affectibus, effectibus*) than our feet: by the former, if we have received any injury, in forgetting it; by the latter, in giving satisfaction, if we ourselves have committed any wrong. The latter is a precept, the former a counsel. Christ speaks of the ancient sacrifices of the Jews, which were then in force; but what is said of them applies much more to the sacrifice of the holy Eucharist; which both shows union with our brethren and causes reconciliation with God; "for we being many are one bread" (1 *Cor.* x. 17).

Verse 25. *Be at agreement.*

The Greek is εὐνοῶν. Tertullian and S. Hilary use the words benevolent and benevolence (*De Patient.* and *Can.* iv.).

With thy adversary.

Some think this adversary to be our evil angel; for two angels are given to every man at his birth: a good angel who prompts us to good deeds, and an evil angel who tempts us to evil ones (Origen, *Hom. on S. Luke* xxxv.).

Others suppose it to be the flesh which makes war upon the spirit—S. Athanasius (*Quæst.* 62) and the poet Juvencus. S. Jerome seems of the same opinion. Others say that it is the conscience which accuses us like a bitter enemy (S. Athanasius, *Eod. loc.*). Others, again, that it is the devil (Tertullian, *De Anim.*), or that it was God and His law which accuse us before God (S. Augustin, i., *In Serm. Dom.*, and *Quæst. Nov. Test.* vii.; Novatus, *De Humil. et Patient.*). S. Basil (*Reg. Brev.* cxxii.), that it is he who endeavours to take something from us, because the words, "Let go thy cloak also," follow. S. Hilary (*Can.* iv.), S. Augustin (*On Levit.* vii. 12), The Author, and S. Jerome suppose the reference to be to the words immediately preceding: "Go first to be reconciled". And this appears to be the true meaning; for the context requires that he who has anything against us (*adversus*) should be called the adversary (*adversarius*). He, then, is our adversary whom we have injured, whom we have called raca or fool, who has any action against us before God. "The way" is the season of this life. The judge is Christ (*S. Matt.* xxv. 40). The officer is the devil, who becomes the minister of God in tormenting the condemned. The prison is hell. The last farthing is the least fault. The farthing was the smallest coin, containing two minuta, and there was a proverb, "To pay to the last farthing," as meaning to be punished to the utmost.

It may be doubted how a brother who has been injured by us can bring us before a judge, as he himself must be judged in his turn. This question induced S. Augustin to refuse the above explanation, but apparently it ought not to have done so. For Christ speaks in accordance with the custom of men and the law, where he who receives an injury brings his adversary before the judge. Not that the injured brother will accuse us before Christ; for he will deliver us to the judge, because we shall be tried in

his cause. He will not deliver us up himself, but the devil will do so for him—reviving the wrong which our brother had forgiven us. The words, "Thou shalt not go out from thence," &c., do not mean what S. Augustin says, that we shall go out afterwards, but that they who are in hell will never come out, for they are always paying the debt; for they owe infinite punishment for each mortal sin, and will never pay it. The word "until," therefore, is to be taken in the same sense as chap. i. 25.

S. Luke for "farthing" has mite, which, as has been said, is half a farthing; but the result is the same—both words mean the least debt. Some other matter is related by S. Luke in a different manner. The answer is easy. The two sermons are not the same.

Verse 28. *Whosoever shall look on.*

Ὁ βλέπων. This does not refer to one who chances to glance at a woman, but to one who does so with a lustful mind.

A woman.

The wife of another, because the word is not fornication but adultery properly so-called, though by one species the whole genus is to be understood.

Verses 29, 30. *If thy right eye.*

If this were taken literally, it would be unreasonable and cruel, and therefore ancient writers take it in metaphor. But they differ as to what is meant by the right eye and the left, the right hand and the left. Some think the right eye to be the mind, the left bodily sense; the right hand the will, the left fleshly appetite. "Not only, then, is bodily sense to be restrained, and the appetite to be bridled, but the higher parts of the soul also, the mind and will, if they be not upright (*rectæ*) are to be cut off as well and cast from us."—(The Author.)

S. Chrysostom, among others (*Hom.* xvii.), understood by the eye and the hand, kept women: because of the words, "whosoever shall look on a woman," &c. Some take the words to mean that even they who are most closely united to us by kindred or friendship are to be rejected if they alienate us from God (S. Hilary, *Can.* iv.; S. Athanasius, *Quæst. 76*; Pacian, *Ep.* iii. *against Novatus*; S. Cyril, xii., *On John* xxviii.; Anastasius, *Quæst. 73*; Salviani, *De Prudent.*, iii.; Theophylact, *in loc.*; Pacian, *On Deut.* xiii. 6-7). Others understood different passions of the mind to be intended, as in *Coloss.* iii. 5. Because they proceed from the body, Christ calls them members of the body (S. Jerome, *Comment.*).

The sense and force of the passage will be apparently lost, if we refer it to anything but the actual eye and hand; for it is a forcible exaggeration, taken from the art of the surgeon, who, when the whole frame is endangered by one member, removes it to preserve the life. Besides, the two parts of our body which are most precious and most necessary to us, the eye and the hand, and the right rather than the left, which we most value and most need, are those named by Christ. Nor are His words out of place; for He does not desire us to cut off our hands or to pluck out our eyes ourselves, but, as in extreme cases, the exception is to be understood if it can be and may be done. As S. Paul says to the Galatians (iv. 15)—To pluck out their eyes and give him was possible indeed, but it was not lawful. Christ, therefore, shows us that we ought to undergo any loss rather than do wrong, and that we ought even to cut off our right hand and pluck out our right eye if we cannot otherwise escape sin; but as we always are able to do so, we are not to maim any part of our bodies. As for those who did so, like Origen, the Church, we know, condemns them.

Whosoever shall put away.

The question as to whether, under the Old Law, the putting away of a wife, who was not pleasing to her husband, were a precept or a privilege, can be settled by these few words. Christ does not say that a man may put away his wife; but if he put her away, he is to give her a writing of divorcement that she do not appear to have left her husband for the sake of her freedom, and that she may marry another without disgrace. But whether the bill of divorcement were conceded as a less evil, or were permitted to avoid a greater, will be discussed in chap. xix. 8, as a more fitting place.

Verse 32. *Excepting the cause of fornication.*

Christ does not permit a bill of repudiation even for fornication, as both the words themselves and the universal custom of the Church show; for He does not say, Let him give her who is put away for fornication a writing of divorcement, which He would have said in the first place, to restrain the license of repudiation, if He had willed it that a woman, put away for that reason, might be married to another, as the modern heretics say; for the law, which was much more liberal in granting divorces in that very matter, put a curb on the license, as many authors of weight assert. The Church knows nothing of libels of divorce, as was said to the Jews "for the hardness of their hearts". We will answer this heresy of the followers of Luther and Calvin on chap. xix. 19. We have only to inquire here whether it is lawful for Christians to put away their wives for the sake of fornication alone. Some think that it is lawful for every sin which is called fornication in Scripture. So Origen (*Tract.* vii. *on S. Matthew*), S. Augustin (i., *De Serm. Dom.*), Strabus (*in loc.*). But this is to enlarge unduly a question which we see Christ chose most especially to close, and to give to

Christians a greater license almost in putting away their wives than the Jews had. For almost all sins are called fornication, because by them we are turned away from the love of Christ to that of a creature. Hence, S. Augustin himself (*Retract.*, i. 19) seems to have retracted the above idea, or, at least, to have been in doubt about it. What then? Are there not many reasons for which a wife may be put away for more justly than adultery? Clearly there are; for it is worse to be a heretic or a parricide than an adulteress. S. Paul seems to say this, for he directs that an unbelieving wife, if she agree to live with a believing husband, shall be kept (1 *Cor.* vii. 12); but he also decides that if she do not agree she shall be put away. But she does not consent who will not live with her husband (*salva religione*). Then, indeed, is the right eye to be plucked out, and the right hand to be cut off, and thrown far away, as Pacian expresses it. That it may not be open to a man to feign excuses for putting away his wife, the Church has laid down *three* great reasons for so doing—sodomy, heresy, tempting the husband to any great crime (*Jur. Can., cap. de Adult., Marit., de Divort.*).

Why, then, did Christ except fornication alone? Probably for *three* reasons. (1) Because for fornication alone a wife may be put away absolutely and for ever, so that even if she subsequently repent, the husband, unless he please, need not receive her again; for she is not put away that she may not commit adultery, but because she has committed it, and that she may pay the penalty all the rest of her life. But when she is put away for other reasons, she is put away, not absolutely and for ever, but only for a time, until she reform and repent, so that she may return to her husband if she comes to her right mind again. (2) Because, if she wish to remain with her husband and to correct her life, the husband can still put her away, because, as we have said, she is put away for the punishment of her

broken conjugal faith, not for her correction. If she be given to other vices, but wishes to reform, her husband cannot put her away, as Rupertus, an ancient author of much learning, proves. (3) Other reasons for separation are not peculiar to marriage, but common to every condition of life; for whether wife, or friend, or relative, or sister, or mother, if she be the cause of sin to us, she must be put away. Adultery is the reason peculiar to marriage for putting away a wife, because she violates that conjugal fidelity which is the basis, as it were, of marriage, and, therefore, because it is a civil contract she dissolves the marriage.

It is a most natural law that to him who does not keep the terms of a contract the contract itself is broken. It remains, therefore, as S. Augustin says, that the bond of the sacrament is too great to be cancelled by adultery. Death alone can do this.

What then, it may be asked, did Christ add here to the Law? Much every way. (1) Because in the Law the wife was not put away for adultery, but was either burned by ancient custom (*Gen.* xxxviii. 24), or stoned (*Levit.* xx. 10; *S. John* viii. 5), or, at least, put to death (*Dan.* xiii. 41). This custom Christ abolished; but, while doing away with the old Law, He did not command the adulteress to be put to death, but suffered her to be put away. (2) He also added that he would not that even for adultery a libel of divorce should be given, that husbands might be more slow in putting away their wives if they knew it to be unlawful either for themselves or for their wives to marry again; but that they must pass the rest of their lives in singleness. (3) He removed the numberless reasons for which wives might be put away (for if a wife were not pleasing to her husband in any way whatever, he might put her away—*Deut.* xxiv. 1), and He only allowed the cause of fornication. (4) He added that although in the Law a

husband could not take back a wife whom he had once put away, under the Gospel He did not order her to be received again, but He desired it (1 *Cor.* vii. 11). (5) Whilst in the Law the wife was allowed to put away the husband, not the husband the wife, in the Gospel the case of husband and wife should be equal. Although Christ has not said so here, S. Paul has said it for Him (1 *Cor.* vii. 10, 11).

Verse 33. *Thou shalt not forswear thyself.*

It has been asked why Christ went back from the commandments of the second table to those of the first? He did not choose to keep the order of words, but to speak of subjects as they occurred. Christ here gives not the words, but the meaning of them. For to take the name of God in vain, which is forbidden in the verses following, is the same as to forswear, because שוא in Hebrew, like *in vanum* in Latin, means both what is unnecessary and what is false.

But thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord.

Numbers xxx. 3 contains the same doctrine though at greater length, and *Psalm* xxiii. 4. "The innocent in hands and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain." His soul, that is, God's—He who has not sworn falsely by the living God. But as there are two kinds of oaths, one of confirming the past, the other by which we promise for the future, Christ has here put one kind for both, as has been observed on verse 29.

Verse 34. *Not to swear at all.*

Some have understood these words wrongly, as if Christ had forbidden all oaths whatever, as the Baptists of these times hold, and the followers of Wicliff held in the times of our fathers. The heresy is an ancient one. S. Augustin (*Epistle* lxxxix., *Quæst.* 5 *to Hilary of Syracuse*) shows

that some Syracusans, a sort of Pelagians, held it, and Origen does not seem to have been far from it (*Tract. on S. Matth.* xxxv.). The cause of the error is their not having seen that the words "at all" (*omnino*) means not the kind but the form (*non genus sed formam*). Christ does not forbid us to swear at any time or under any circumstances, but in any way or any form we please—neither by God, nor by the heavens, nor by the earth, nor by the holy city, nor by our head; and He immediately adds, in explanation, "at all". In the same way S. James (v. 12) sets it out at length. "At all" (*omnino*) has another meaning, as shall shortly be explained.

We are taught, both by the use of the Church and by the example of the saints, that it is lawful to swear, and where, when, and how we ought to swear. For S. Paul used an oath to the Romans (*Rom.* i. 9; 2 *Cor.* i. 23; *Philipp.* i. 8; 1 *Thess.* ii. 5, 10) and the angel in the *Apocalypse* (x. 6). What then did Christ add to the Law? He added merely what had been omitted by the Law. In the Law it was only said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain". Christ added not only the name of God, but that of the heavens and the earth, or any other creature. He added also that as, by these words, perjury alone was forbidden, He disallowed not only this, but every oath which even if true was not necessary.

But why He forbade an unnecessary oath, but suffered men to swear truly, is a question worthy of consideration. Many ancient writers have thought that this was not expressly prohibited by Him, because to swear a true oath unnecessarily was sin; but, lest by frequently swearing they might sometimes swear falsely (*Wisdom* xxiii. 9-12; *Prov.* x. 19). So S. Clement (*Strom:* vii.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xvii. *on Matt.*), The Author, S. Basil (*Hom. on Psalm* xiv.), S. Ambrose (*Serm.* xiv. *on Psalm* cxviii.), S. Augustin (i., *De Serm.*, *Dom.*, and *Psalms* lxxxviii., cix.),

S. Jerome (*On Zach.* viii.); and their opinion seems, from *S. James* v. 12, to be correct; as if He had said, "Lest by frequent taking of oaths you sometimes commit perjury, and fall into a sin for which you will be condemned".

But the sense of the Church is different, and it is clear that Christ forbade unnecessary oaths, not for the avoidance of the great danger of sin, but because unnecessary swearing is *ipsum per se* in itself, and of itself, a sin. For He gives the reason why He would have us swear neither by the heaven nor the earth—not lest by frequent oath-taking we should commit perjury, but because the one is His throne and the other His footstool: and it is irreverent "to set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue through the earth" (*Psalm* lxxii. 9). This, although said here in another sense, we may apply to this subject, and this seems the sense of the words "at all"; as if it were said: "You have heard that it has been said to them of old, Thou shalt not foreswear thyself, but thou shalt perform thy oaths unto the Lord. But I say to you not to swear at all:" that is, not to swear even truly; though the words, "without necessity," are understood, because Christ alludes to the other sense of the word לשוא *in vanum*, that is, in vain, without cause, without necessity.

Neither by heaven; for it is the throne of God.

From this reason we may conclude that even to creatures, as far as they have reference to God, something of the honour, not only of urbanity, as modern heretics say, but also of religion, is due. For, as it is contrary to religion to swear by anyone when and how we ought not, so, to swear when and how we ought is an act of religion. God has also commanded us not to swear by the names of false gods, but by His own name (*Deut.* vi. 13, and *Psalm* lxii. 12). If, then, it is in accordance with religion to swear by the heavens and the earth, because the one is

His throne and the other His footstool, how much more so is it to swear by Peter or Paul or others of the saints and blessed, who are the temple of God? If this honour is due to them, other honours also of the same kind are due to them:—that we should venerate them and worship them (*veneremur et colemus*), as being under God, as the servants of God, as the temples of God. For we give honour neither to heaven nor earth as they are God, but as they are some part of God. The error, then, of the followers of Luther and Calvin is impious, as giving nothing of the honour of religion to any but God.

Verse 35. *Nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.*

The great King—that is, God—who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (*S. Tim.* vi. 14; *Apoc.* xix. 26). The Evangelist says King, rather than Lord or God, because he alludes to the king of Judah, who had his palace there. He adds the word "great" to distinguish God from the king, as the city was the "holy" city (chap. iv., verse 5).

Verse 36. *Neither by thy head.*

As Christ had said of heaven it is the throne, and of the earth it is the footstool, of God, so He says of Jerusalem, "It is the city of the great King". Lest we should think that we may swear by our head, because it is our own, He added, Neither by thy head; He also gives an additional and peculiar reason for this. For He forbade them to swear by the other objects, because they had some portion of the service of sanctity which they show to God. The head is ours, and not ours: ours, as we have received it from God to use and possess for a time; not ours, because we not only did not make it, but we cannot make one hair of it white or black.

Verse 37. *But let your speech be yea, yea; no, no.*

Christ is not speaking here of our truthfulness or faith in the performance of our promises, but of our abstinence from every species of oath, and therefore the words, "Yea, yea; no, no," are necessarily opposed to oaths, not to falsehood or want of faith. The meaning is that when we have to say "yea" (*est*), that is, to affirm, we should not do so with an oath, but by a simple affirmation, "It is so," and when we deny a thing, we should not swear that it is not so, but simply say "Nay" (*non*) (S. Chrysostom, *in loc.;* S. Jerome, *Ep. to Celantius;* Rabanus, *In S. Thomam*).

That which is over and above these is of evil.

The meaning of these words has proved a great difficulty and different explanations have been offered. Some say that "of evil" means that it proceeds from the person who is evil in his not believing the one who simply affirms the thing, but compels him to add an oath; and thus the wickedness of his unbelief extorts an oath from the speaker (S. Augustin, i., *De Serm. Dom.*). Others say that the words allude to the infirmity of the Jews, to whom it was permitted to swear by the creature as they might not do so by God (S. Chrysostom). This has been answered on verse 34. Theophylact says that the reference is to the devil, who introduced the custom of swearing. This seems the true meaning; both because Christ does not say ἐκ τοῦ κάκου, but ἐκ τοῦ πονήρου, the malignant one, by which name the devil is called (vi. 13; xiii. 19); and also because of the addition of the article, as much as to say, It is of *the* evil one, and because Christ introduces a tacit antithesis between Himself and the devil. For He had said, "But I say to you not to swear at all," but simply to use the words, "Yea," "No," "for what is more," that is, the oath in addition to the simple affirmation or negation, I would not have you

to add. It is the devil who teaches and instigates you to swear, for such frequent and rash oaths are his invention.

Verse 38. *An eye for an eye.*

These are the words of the Law (*Exod.* xxi. 24; *Levit.* xxiv. 20; *Deut.* xix. 21). Christ does not say more than the first words, the rest being well known. It was the *lex talionis*, a law, according to the philosophers and the opinion of all nations, very just and natural. It means that every man should receive according to his actions. In the twelve tables, which are, as it were, a natural code of laws, there was one very similar to this. Aristotle writes on it in the fifth book of the *Ethics*, and Aulus Gellius in his twentieth book gives a lengthy and subtle disputation on the subject between a philosopher and jurisconsult.

This law was given, as a rule, not to private persons, but to magistrates, lest they should either exceed or fall short of the due degree of justice. To private individuals, on the contrary, it was said, "Seek not revenge" (*Levit.* xix. 18). What then did Christ add to the Law? This firstly: He did away the *lex talionis*, which restrained a man from violence only from fear of the consequences, as SS. Hilary and Chrysostom (*Hom.* xviii.), The Author, Euthymius, and Theophylact have observed; for He would have us act not from fear as slaves, but from love as sons (*Rom.* viii. 15). "For the Law worketh wrath" (*Rom.* iv. 15); the Gospel, grace (*S. John* i. 27). In addition, He taught us not only not to seek revenge, but to endure injuries with patience; and not only endure them, but even to wish for them—to glory in them. Lastly, to one who strikes us on one cheek He bids us offer the other; and to him who takes our coat to give our cloak also (as *Rom.* v. 3). S. Hilary says that whilst the Law only cut off the branches, Christ destroyed the root itself. "In the Law," says S. Jerome, "is retribution; in the Gospel is grace." In the

one, faults are corrected ; in the other, the first principles of sin are rooted out.

Verse 39. *Not to resist evil.*

SS. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xviii.), Theophylact, and Euthymius understand the devil. I suppose because he is called πόνηρος, as before with the article. Does Christ then teach us not to resist the devil, whom *S. John* iv. 7 and 1 *S. Peter* v. 9 command us to resist manfully in the faith? We must resist him, indeed, but not in this manner —not by seeking revenge. For this is not to resist, but to hold out the hand to him. Fire is not extinguished by fire, but increased. Others understand the words of one who has done a wrong. Others, again, not of an evil person, but thing: others take evil (*malo*) for the ablative case, as if he said, Give not evil for evil—return not evil by evil—but overcome evil by good (*Rom.* xii. 17 ; xvii. 21 ; 1 *Peter* iii. 29).

Others consider it the dative, which seems to me more probable. For Christ calls the wrong done to us "evil"; and He commands us not to resist, but rather to show ourselves prepared for it, and when we have received a blow upon one cheek to offer the other.

S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) asserts that neither Christ, nor the Apostles however perfect, observed this precept. For even Christ turned not His cheek to the man who smote Him before the judge, but He resisted, if not by hand, by word (*S. John* xviii. 23) ; and when S. Paul was struck by order of the judge, he not only did not offer his other cheek, but, as far as he could he resisted, and even uttered some harsh words in return (*Acts* xxiii. 3) ; and when beaten and cast into prison, he followed up his rights with threats (*Acts* xvi. 37).

From these examples we learn either that what Christ here teaches is not a precept, or that it is not to be under-

stood as the words seem to imply. For if it were a precept, or were to be understood literally, both Christ and S. Paul would have kept it so. It is partly a precept, therefore, and partly a counsel. The following are the parts of the precept: First, not to seek for revenge. Secondly, to turn the other cheek; that is, to receive an injury rather than seek to revenge one already received. Thirdly, to be ready to yield up somewhat of our right whenever charity and the love of God seem to require it. It is a counsel that, though neither charity nor the love of God absolutely require it of us, yet that we should do all, literally, for our own mortification. Not, indeed, provoking our enemy to do us wrong, but being ready to receive it. Thus, S. Lawrence is reported to have said: "It is cooked, come, sit down and eat".

But if one strike thee on the right.

The words right cheek, rather than the left, are used as a form of speech—not with reference to the blow, for a buffet is apt to fall on the left side before the right, as the left is opposite the right hand of the striker, and it is apt to light upon the left cheek, as S. Augustin says.

S. Luke says simply, "On the right cheek" (*in*). It is a forcible Christian antithesis, for to the *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye, Christ opposes, if we may so speak, the *talio* of patience—that for one wrong received we should accept another. The Ethnics of old did not understand this when they said that this Law of Christ would destroy the state, for it gave impunity to crimes (*Marcellus to S. Augustin, Ep.* iv.); as if states did not stand more firmly by patience than by force: by virtue than by law. Christ, too, does not bind the hands of the judge, nor prevent him from judging murderers and other criminals; nor so abrogate the law that the judge cannot enforce it. He only discountenances compulsion. For Christian judges

require eye for eye and tooth for tooth when they condemn a man to death for murder. But He puts, as it were, fetters on individual persons, lest, whilst they endeavour to correct their wrongs by their own hand, they double it. Christ does not take away the power of punishment, but He removes the occasion of sin.

Verse 41. *And whosoever will force thee one mile.*

Angariaverit, ἀγγάρευσει. This is not a Greek or Latin word originally, but one in use among the Persians, by whom public messengers were called *angarii*. They had power to compel men to carry burthens, and they might take any man's horses or ships. Hence the Greeks and Latins use the word to signify those who are compelled for money to carry burthens or act as guides, as Simon the Cyrenian was "angariated" to bear the Cross (xxvii. 32). Christ therefore justly numbers this either among the benefits we do to others, if done by our free will, or among the benefits we receive from them, if by compulsion.

Go with him other two.

The word "other" is perhaps an addition to the Latin version. It would apparently be better away, as it involves three miles, and Christ spoke only of the receipt of two injuries, as in the instance of the right and left cheeks.

Verse 42. *Give to him that asketh of thee.*

That is, whoever asks of thee, give to him, as we see in *S. Luke* vi. 30. We are not commanded here to have no respect of persons. They are to be aided first who are first in need. Nor are we to give recklessly to all who ask; nor to take no account of our property; nor to treat our friends as we should our enemies, our kindred as strangers. Charity demands that we should assist our parents before strangers; our friends rather than those of whom we have

no knowledge. This rule Christ assuredly desired to confirm, not to destroy. So entirely is that respect of persons which is opposed to justice, not charity, forbidden. My father and another meet me. Each is in need. I cannot give to both. I give to my father, and pass the other by. For charity requires this of me.

We must have regard, as the Doctors of Church teach, to persons. When we do alms we must consider the quality of the person. He may be a person wholly unfit for charity; as if I give to a man because he is rich, or because he can give to me again; or he has no proper claim, as if I give to one because he is a Greek or a Latin by birth. Alms are to be given for poverty, not to one of this nation or that.

Verse 43. *You have heard.*

The question as to where this is found was discussed on verse 21. Your neighbour רֵעֲךָ "your friend," for that is the meaning of the Hebrew word. That is, one who is near to you in blood or friendship. Such an one is called our neighbour, not as some think in a foreign tongue, but in the Latin; for so Cicero himself often speaks. The meaning is found in the Law: "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself" (*Levit.* xix. 18, *proximum*). That is, thy friend, as is shown by the force of the word "love" and the antithesis which Christ uses. For he was called a "friend" in the Law who not only was but ought to be such. A Jew ought to be such. What some say, therefore, and especially heretics, that even the Jews had this command in the Law (as in *Exod.* xxiii. 4) is wholly foreign to the subject. For the very person who is here called an enemy (*inimicus*) was a friend as being a Jew: an enemy as entertaining a personal hatred to the other. The same person is therefore called a brother (*Deut.* xxii. 1). This is the more difficult, because Christ, in *S. Luke* x. 29, seems

to teach us who is our neighbour otherwise; but His explanation is not of the Law but of the Gospel. Christ willed by it to destroy the difference of nations, the wall having been broken down, and there being in Him neither Jew nor Greek, but a new creature; so that the Jews were no longer a peculiar people to Him, but there was to be one fold and one shepherd.

It might be proved that the Pharisees did not err in their interpretation of the precept, but that they only who are friends and deserve well of us are to be called our neighbours. For that lawyer, or scribe, or Pharisee, or certain person learned in the Law, is said to have judged rightly, that neither the priest nor the Levite, but the Samaritan, who performed the part of a friend to the man who fell among the thieves, was his neighbour. But we know that Christ meant otherwise. We merely wish to show that it cannot be proved, from the above passage, that every man, without distinction, is called our neighbour in that precept of the Law.

Verse 44. *Love your enemies.*

This, as all the Ancients say, and as has been proved on verses 21, 43, is a peculiar precept of the Gospel. In this, as in all else that Christ added, part is of precept, part of counsel. It is a precept that we are not to cherish hatred, not to return evil for evil, not to wish evil to others, but to hold them in love, and not to exclude them from the common prayers, alms, and benefits which we perform for others. It is a counsel that we be charitable even to such as are not in extreme need: salute them by name: hold familiar converse with them. The words, "Bless them that curse you," which are found in the Greek, our version omits. They are not necessary to the sense, but they agree with the context, and the more because S. Paul seems possibly to allude to them (1 *Cor.* iv. 12).

Verse 45. *That you may be the children.*

Most authors explain this: That you may be; that is, that you may declare yourselves to be sons. This may be allowed, but it seems better to say that it is a Hebraism, by which one who resembles another is styled his son; and it seems more appropriate, because it is mere tautology to call sons the sons of their fathers, but to say that they resemble their fathers is a common expression.

This also states how they will be the sons of the Father —that is, will resemble Him—if they do good to all; for "God maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (verse 45); and it is said in verse 48: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect," where it is shown how we may, not indeed be, but be like, the sons of God. It is not to be denied that there is a power to be made the sons of God given to those who believe in the name of Christ, who are born, "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". The meaning of the passage is what has to be explained.

Verse 46. *What reward shall you have?*

Christ does not deny that they who love their friends shall have their reward, for it is of charity to do so. But He says that they will have none if they only love them like the publicans, that is, not for the sake of God, but either from a natural attraction to them, or because of the advantages they hope to gain from them. Whoever does not love his enemies shows plainly that he does not love his friends for the sake of God (*propter Deum*), but for his own sake. For if he loved them *propter Deum*, he would love his enemies also, who, not less than his friends, are the image of God. He, therefore, who loves his friends but not his enemies, because he does not love them *propter Deum*,

but to gain some good to himself from his friendship, has no reward of love from God. But he who loves not only his friends but his enemies also, will have the reward, not only of his love of his enemies, but of his friends also, for God rewards not nature but grace.

Do not even the publicans this?

They were called publicans because they collected the revenues for the ruler. They were a covetous class, and were called τελῶναι by the Greeks, מוכסים by the Hebrews. They were held in general detestation, especially when Christ said this; when the Jews were compelled to pay tribute, not to a ruler of their own nation, but to the Roman emperor. Hence the question whether it were lawful to give tribute to Cæsar (*S. Mark* xii. 14; *S. Luke* xx. 2).

Publicans were held as public and abandoned sinners (*S. Matt.* ix. 10, 11; xi. 19; xviii. 17; xxi. 31, 32; *S. Luke* iii. 12, 13). Christ spoke in accordance with this opinion. S. Matthew was at one time a publican, and sat at receipt of custom (ix. 9); but from a publican the grace of God made him an Apostle and Evangelist.

Verse 48. *Be you therefore perfect as also your Heavenly Father.*

The word "as" contains the meaning, not of equality (*æqualitatem*), but of quality (*qualitatem*) and resemblance, that similitude which can exist between God and man, not that between man and man. Christ prays "that they all may be one" (*S. John* xvii. 21), as He was one with the Father. Not that we can attain to that natural oneness, which is between the Father and the Son, but we can imitate it. Christ proposes a mark to us for our perfection to which He knows that we cannot attain, that we may come as near to it as we can. He does not will us to

advance so far, but that we should not stand still. He would have us in all things to be as like the Father as possible, especially in that which is His own chief property—mercy. When therefore S. Matthew says, "Be you perfect," S. Luke says, "Be you therefore merciful" (vi. 36).

CHAPTER VI.

A CONTINUATION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Verse 1. *Take heed.*

MALDONATUS briefly raises the question whether this chapter is a continuation of the last, or whether it contains the account of another sermon in another place. He inclines to the latter opinion, from the fact that, as he thinks, the former chapter was apparently addressed to the Apostles alone, this to the people at large. He suggests that Christ had come down from the Mount, and delivered this on the plain. But he does not account for the words of S. Matthew (viii. 1): "When He was come down from the mountain".

That you do not your justice.

The Greek reads ἐλεημοσύνην, "alms," as does S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xix.), The Author (*Hom.* xiii.), Theophylact, and Euthymius. The Latins have "justice": SS. Hilary, Jerome, Augustin (*Tract.* vi. *in Epistle of S. John*, and *Serm.* lix. *de Temp.*; lib. ii., *De Serm. Dom.*), Gregory (viii. 30, *On Job*, and in *Pastor. Part*, iii., *Admonit.* 36), and the poet Juvencus. Among these, also, is Origen (*Hom* ii. *in Exod.*). It is possible that some Greek, not understanding the meaning of "justice" here, and reading in the following verses, "When thou dost an alms-deed" (verses 2, 3), thought it an error, and put alms for justice. Our version seems the better both because (1) our translator, and

those ancient Latin authors, who did not use it, so read the passage; and (2) there is no reason why justice should have been put for alms from the ignorance of the writer, but alms might have been put for justice for the reason above; (3) because (*a*) the force of the passage requires that, firstly, justice in general, and then alms in particular, should be put; and (*b*) the word justice, in Hebrew צדקה is often put for mercy and alms, as in *Psalm* cii. 18.

It is clear that our Lord repeats His words, and that that which in the first clause is called "mercy," in the second is termed "justice," חסד and צדקה and in *Psalm* cxi. 9, where "distributed" and "given" mean alms, the Hebrew is צדקה a Hebraism followed by S. Paul (2 *Cor.* ix. 10), who there terms alms "the fruits of your justice". Hence the LXX., where the Hebrew word חסד—"justice," is found for alms, have not only rendered it justice, but they have often done so where it is חסד—"mercy," as if צדקה meant, in common use, both mercy and alms-giving, as *Genesis* xx. 13; xxi. 23; *Deut.* xxiv. 13. So here also justice is put for alms, as is immediately explained: "When thou dost an alms-deed". How this agrees with the other passage, "So let your light" (verse 16), has been explained (chap. v., verse 16).

Otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father.

As if Christ had said, "You shall have it indeed before men, for whose respect you do it" (as below, verses 2, 3). These have received their reward, which they sought; that is, vainglory from men. But from your Father they shall not have it, for they do it not for His sake. It is right that for whom a man labours, from him he should receive his reward, and that there should be a single, not a double, reward for one work.

Verse 2. *Sound not a trumpet before thee.*

Euthymius says that some have affirmed, what Strabus

thinks probable and N. de Lyra certain, that it was the custom either of the Jews generally, or of the Pharisees in particular, when they gave alms, to call the poor together by the sound of a trumpet. But they offer no proof of their assertion. That they were vain enough to do this is certain; whether they were so liberal may be a question. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xix.), The Author (*Hom.* xiii.), Theophylact (*In Comment.*), are of a different opinion. It is more probable that Christ alluded to the custom of assembling the people, by sound of trumpet, when a thing was to be done publicly or any proclamation made (*Joel* ii. 15), or to that of actors, who used to give information, by the sound of trumpets, of the commencement of their exhibitions. For Christ here introduces a kind of tragedy or comedy of the Pharisees. The word "hypocrite" shows this. It was applied to the actor, who, when he was one person, pretended to be another. S. Augustin has observed this. Then the words, "to be seen by men" (verse 1), belong to the drama. A theatre is so called, as being a place of spectacles, and it is a peculiarity of it to sound a trumpet. Christ signifies that there is no particle of truth and solid virtue in a hypocrite. Whatever he does bears the stamp of simulation, and he therefore desires to be seen. Christ teaches us that our guide should be virtue, and that we should desire no other spectator than God.

In the synagogues.

(See iv. 23.) The teachers of heresy, by a great exaggeration of expression, almost universally render this passage "conventicles" or *conciliabula*. Christ desired to signify that the hypocrites loved to frequent crowded places, that they might be seen, such as the synagogues, in which, as in our temples now, the people met together. Whoever puts the above words for synagogue lowers the force of the word. The words themselves show that these places were of less account than the synagogue.

Verse 3. *Let not thy left hand.*

The left hand can possess neither knowledge nor ignorance; and therefore these words have been thought to express a metaphor, and in consequence much difference of opinion has arisen as to their exact meaning. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xix.) and Theophylact (*in loc.*) appear to understand them correctly when they say that they are not a metaphor but merely a hyperbolical expression, like that in verses 29, 30. The meaning, then, is that we ought to avoid witnesses of our justice, so that if our left hand had eyes, it might not be able to see what our right hand was doing. The left hand being mentioned before the right contrarily to the custom mentioned in chap. v. 23, and the act of the right hand being subjected to the left, is caused by the fact that in doing alms we extend the right hand and not the left. In other things that we do by hand, the right hand does them and the left assists it; so that if it had eyes it could not be ignorant of what the right was doing. Christ, then, orders us so to do our alms that the left hand should not possibly know what the right was doing. This rule is to be observed in all devout actions, and most especially in almsgiving; for men seek more glory from nothing, and from nothing ought they to seek for less. An alms, even if small, is a great benefit to the poor; a greater still if secret and no one know it but he only who receives. He who gives regarding the praise of men, has given to himself, not to the poor; or if he have given anything he has sold, not given. The poor man is not able to pay the price, but others pay it for him when they praise the giver regarding him only. The payment to him is to be seen.

Ecclus. xxix. 15 has a saying precisely similar. It is no sin to be seen giving alms, but to desire to be seen; and not wholly this, but the wish to be seen to gain the praise of men. This alone Christ forbids. The wish to be

seen for God's sake He does not forbid: He commands it (chap. v. 16).

Verse 4. *In secret.*

As known only to God and ourselves.

Will repay thee.

The Greek text reads "openly". In the time of S. Augustin the Latin copies, on the contrary, read it and the Greek did not, as he says (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*). It is probable, therefore, that the earliest Greek copies from which the Latin version was made, and which the Church used before S. Jerome, contained these words, and that they afterwards dropped out of the Greek from the carelessness of transcribers, but were retained in the Latin; and that St. Jerome, as they were not read in the Greek in his time, and as he corrected, as he said, the Latin version to the Greek, expunged them from the Latin. The antithesis requires them to be read "in secret" and "openly". *S. Luke* xiv. 4 for "openly" reads "in the Resurrection"—that is, in the last judgment, before all men who are, and who have been, and who will be.

For equity and the sentence require us to believe that Christ promised us much greater glory even among men if we do our alms secretly than they will have who do them only to receive glory from men: for these can only do them in the sight of a few, whose glory in the judgment before all men will be their greatest ignominy. They who, when they do alms, wish to be seen by none, will, although they wish it not, be then seen by all, and they will receive praise from all. S. Paul used thus to console himself and others (*Philipp.* ii. 16; 2 *Tim.* i. 12, 18; iv. 8).

Verse 5. *That love.*

The Greek reads ὅτι φιλοῦσιν, *quia amant.* Either, therefore, our translator read οἵ for ὅτι, or someone in-

serted *qui* for *quid* in his version. It was more easy to substitute *qui* for *quid* than *οἵ* for *ὅτι*. Our version, therefore, seems to require correction rather than the Greek; but following *φιλοῦσι*, they render it *solent*, "are accustomed to". Our version is better, because Christ blames not only the custom, which might exist without the feeling, but much more the desire of glory, as in chap. xxiii. 6.

In the synagogues.

See verse 2.

And corners.

The word "corners" here does not carry its usual meaning of a concealed and secret place (as *Acts* xxvi. 26), but one public and conspicuous and much frequented. This is shown by the adjunct "of streets". Christ calls the courts streets, and public roads "corners," *i.e.*, the "Bivia" and "Trivia," the spots where two and three roads meet, as in the history of Thamar (*Gen.* xxxviii. 14).

To stand.

Some think that it was the custom of the Jews to pray standing, because in many places those who were praying are said to have been standing (*S. Mark* xi. 25; *S. Luke* xviii. 11). But it seems otherwise from other passages (*Acts* ix. 40; x. 36; xxi. 5; "and Christ kneeled," *S. Luke* xxii. 41). Nature also teaches us to pray in that position, nor does it seem probable that the Pharisees, who desired to appear most especially holy, prayed otherwise. The word "stands," therefore, in this passage would appear to mean remaining fixed and immovable, as men with minds wrapt up in heaven, as in chap. xx. 3, 6; *S. Mark* iii. 31; xi. 25; *S. Luke* xviii. 11.

Their reward.

Either that of which they were worthy, or which they sought (SS. Jerome, Augustin).

Verse 6. *Enter into thy chamber.*

SS. Augustin, Jerome, and others have been of opinion that the word "chamber" here is used allegorically, but S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* viii. *on* 1 *Tim.*) and Theophylact *(in loc.)* take it to mean a literal bed-chamber. Christ does not command us literally to enter our chamber and shut the door, but to avoid the empty praise of men. He, therefore, who prays in public, wishing to be seen and heard by none but God, or, if seen and heard by men, to be seen and heard not for his own praise but for the praise of God, prays in his own chamber with the door shut. For he does not seek his own praise more than if he prayed alone in his chamber. On the other hand, they who pray alone with the door shut, wishing men, however, to know it, pray in the streets and sound a trumpet before them, and the more they conceal themselves the more they are discovered. Christ, therefore, does not do away with the custom confirmed by the laudable use of both Jews and Christians, of praying in public (3 *Kings* viii. 29; *Acts* i. 24; iii. 1; iv. 24; vi. 6; xii. 12). He only corrects our motives. S. Paul would have us lift up pure hearts in every place (1 *Tim.* ii. 8). It is our own fault that a prayer made in public can seek after human praise. If we prayed, all of us, everywhere, it would not be singular that one should pray in public, nor, from the fact of this being done by all would any praise be sought; but the prayers would be unencumbered by the expectation of human praise, and have greater force, being assisted by those of others at the same time. "We pray," says Tertullian, "as if with our whole strength (*quasi facta manu*). This zeal is grateful to God" (*Apolog.;* Origen, *Hom.* vii. in *Josue; Hom.* iii. *de Nat Dei*).

Verse 7. *Speak not much.*

Μὴ βαττολογήσητε. The word is derived either from an obscure poet named Battus, who is said to have stuttered

or used senseless repetitions, or from some other of the same name. Christ does not blame repetitions or rapidity in prayer, although these are justly subjects of blame; but a senseless and superfluous number of affected expressions, as appears from the verse following, as S. Greg. Nyss. (*Lib. de Orat.*) has observed.

Christ does not prohibit those prayers from being long which He said, in another place, should be unceasing (*S. Luke* xviii. 1, as S. Paul, 1 *Thess.* v. 17; *Coloss.* iv. 2), nor that we should speak when praying, nor use repetitions; for He Himself spoke and used the same words thrice (chap. xxvi. 44; *S. Mark* xiv. 39); but He forbade us to speak with the intention that men should see that we pray well, and to think that God hears more readily if we use many words than if we use few; as He says immediately afterwards: "They think that in their much speaking they may be heard".

Nor are the Euchitæ termed heretics by S. Epiphanius (*Her.* lxxx.) and S. Augustin (*Lib. ad Quod Vult.*, chap. lvii.) for this reason, but because they thought that no one could be saved unless he literally prayed without ceasing; not understanding that Christ said, "We ought always to pray" (*S. Luke* xviii. 1), as not meaning that we should pray perpetually and without intermission, which He knew that we could not do: but that when we ask a thing from God once, and do not obtain it, we ought not therefore to be weary or to cast away our faith, but to seek again and again without any definite limit as to number. Doing this, we shall at length obtain what we ask. The parable of the Unjust Judge shows this.

The heathens.

The error of the heathen was to suppose that the more they spoke, and the louder their voice, the more they would be heard by God (3 *Kings* xviii. 27). Elias alludes to this custom of theirs. The ten tribes followed it.

In their much speaking.

A Hebraism, putting "in" for "for," *in* for *pro* or *propter*, ἐν for διά (*S. Mark* ix. 38).

Verse 9. *Thus, therefore, shall you pray.*

It is uncertain whether Christ taught this prayer twice or once only. The doubt has arisen from S. Luke (xi. 2) having said that when the disciples asked Him to pray, He replied: "When you pray say": S. Matthew, however, in this place, seems to imply that He gave them this prayer, not as having been asked, but of His own will. Rupertus thinks that Christ taught the same prayer twice on different occasions. The contrary would seem the more probable, for why should He do this, unless we say, which is not improbable, that in *S. Luke* He taught only the disciples by whom He had been asked to do so; and here the whole multitude, who had not heard the prayer before. If we say that it was only delivered once, we must say that S. Matthew does not describe one only assembly; but that what Christ had taught at different times and to many assemblies, he wished to cast into one, that he might bring nearly all Christ's teaching under one aspect.

Thus, therefore, shall you.

You who ought to seek praise from God, not from men, like the heathen: you who have been taught by Me that God regards not the multitude of words, but is prevailed upon by the earnest desire of him who prays and who asks nothing but what is right, and tends to the glory of God.

Thus.

Not that we must necessarily use these actual words, as S. Augustin and Bede say. For the Apostles used others, as in *Acts* i. 24. But while they did this to propagate the Gospel, and show forth the glory of God, if they do

not use the exact words, they say the same thing in fact: "Hallowed be Thy name," and when they confess the will and election of God, what do they say but "Thy will be done"? Nor is Christ Himself said to have always prayed in these words, but He did pray to the same effect (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 39; *S. Luke* xxii. 42); and He said in a few words all that He taught in that prayer, except what He could not say. He called God His Father as He taught us to do, and asked that His name might be sanctified when He sought His glory. "If it be possible," He said—that is, if it can be done, saving Thy glory (*salva tua gloria*)—He knew that it could be done absolutely, and the Father's glory preserved—"but yet, not My will but Thine be done." He sought and asked for His daily bread when He sought and asked for His life. He only did not ask that His debts might be forgiven, for (1 *Pet.* ii. 22) "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth"; nor that He might not be led into temptation, for He could not fall; nor that He might be delivered from evil, for He had just overcome evil in a personal contest (chap. iv. 1). Nor did He will that when we pray we should ask for all that is contained in this prayer, but for all, or some of the things—at least for nothing opposed to it. He prayed for those who crucified Him: not in one of these petitions, but as in their spirit, that the mind of God might be sanctified even in the salvation of His enemies. The Church, then, has rightly allowed it to this prayer alone to use not only the matter but the very words themselves of Christ. "It is," says S. Cyprian, "a friendly and familiar prayer that God asks of His own, and the words of Christ go up to His ears. The Father acknowledges the prayer of His Son, for He who dwells in His bosom is also the same person in His voice" (*Lib. de Orat.*).

The Church has justly given to this the first place among all the prayers, private and public. Christ had said,

just before: "Speak not much" (verse 7). He now gives a very brief form of prayer. "Yet that brevity," says Tertullian (*Lib. de Orat.*), "is supported by a body of most large and happy meaning. As much as it is bounded by words is it enlarged in application." "Such," says S. Cyprian, "are the mysteries of the Lord's Prayer, so many and so great, collected into one form, but so spiritually copious in power, that nothing whatever is passed over which may be comprehended in our prayers and supplications as a compendium of heavenly doctrine." Tertullian, therefore, rightly terms it "the Breviary of the Gospel" (*breviarium*).

S. Augustin (*Serm. in Mont.*, ii.), says that this prayer contains SEVEN PETITIONS: 1. Hallowed be Thy name. 2. Thy kingdom come. 3. Thy will be done. 4. Give us this day our supersubstantial bread. 5. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. 6. Lead us not into temptation. 7. Deliver us from evil. The seven were afterwards compressed into six by putting the two last into one. It must be observed that (as had been previously pointed out) the first three petitions concern the honour of God, the rest our own advantage; so the precepts of the *Decalogue* are divided into two tables, of which the first treats of that which pertains to God, the second of our duty to our neighbour. This is the meaning of the thirty-third verse: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God". God would not have our good separated from His honour; for that can never be good for us which is not honourable to Him. He, therefore, makes His honour the rule of our good. He who follows this can err no more than he who does not follow it can avoid so doing.

Father.

The commencing of the Prayer with the name of "Father" does not tend to produce undue boldness in our address to God, as Tertullian, S. Cyprian, and S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xx.) have supposed. "It rather induces us to conciliate

the lovingkindness of God by a name of mildness, and to move Him to grant our requests by the appellation of Father" (S. Augustin, lib. ii., *De Serm. Dom.*). The Lord's Prayer possesses its own rhetoric. Christ's words (chap. vii. 11) apply here. The name of "Father" itself prays for us; for it is the duty of the father to make provision for his son, and to overlook his faults. The Prodigal Son, when he came to himself, used the same word (*S. Luke* xv. 18). Tertullian (*De Orat.*) and S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) have observed that God will not be called "Father" in the Old Testament, but "Lord". "They were servants, we are sons" (*Rom.* viii. 15).

We may enquire here whether (1) only the First Person of the Holy Trinity is addressed, or (2) whether the whole Three are called "Father". SS. Cyprian, Chrysostom, and Rupertus think that the Father alone is thus addressed. On their part, it may be said that Christ calls the same Person His Father and ours, though not in the same sense (*S. John* xx. 17).

2. The opinion of those who say that the whole Trinity is here invoked by us as "Father" seems better. Why do we call God our Father? (1) Because He created us. But the Father did not create us alone: the whole of the Holy Trinity did so. (2) Because He preserves us. But the whole Trinity does the same. (3) Because He redeemed us. But the Father alone did not redeem us: all the Persons redeem us—the whole Holy Three in acting; the Son alone in suffering. In respect, therefore, of our redemption, the Son alone might be called "Father," rather than the Father Himself only. (4) Because we are regenerated by grace. But the whole Trinity regenerated us.

Our.

Christ has laid His commands on us that we do not address God each as if He were his own Father alone.

To effect this He has given us not a private prayer, but the public one of the whole Church; so that, when we pray, we pray to God as one member of the whole Church. Whoever does otherwise may indeed pray to God, but He will most assuredly not obtain his prayer (*orare . . . exorare*). So say SS. Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustin, and others.

It has been observed on the passage that the words show the difference between Christ and ourselves. We do not call God "my Father," but "our Father". Christ calls Him not "Our Father," but "My Father". For in the sense in which He is "our Father" He is the Father of all in common. For He created all, He preserves all, He supports all, and, as far as in Him lies, He has redeemed all.

But in the sense in which He is the Father of Christ He is the Father of no other. For He is His Father, not as He created Him, but as He begot Him of His own essence, and, therefore, as S. Ambrose says (v. 4, *De Sac.*), Christ calls Him, in a peculiar manner, His Father. We call Him our Father in a general sense: He begot Christ; He created us. Another and more peculiar reason why we call God "Father" and "our Father" may be that through Christ we have been regenerated. For it is clear that they who have never been baptised and who do not believe in Christ cannot use this prayer; and yet they have been created, supported, redeemed by God. We do not, then, call God "our Father" because He has only created, supported, and redeemed us, but also because He has regenerated us through faith and the grace of baptism (*S. John* i. 12). "He has not imparted this gift to others, and, therefore, He cannot be called 'Father' by them" (Tertullian, v.; S. Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.*). When, therefore, we call God "our Father," we are distinguished not only from Christ, but also from unbelievers. We call God

our Father, as He is the Father of those who believe and not of those who believe not. Is He not, then, the Father of all? Most assuredly He is so (*Ephes.* iv. 6); but He is the Father, in a peculiar manner, of those who, through faith in Christ, are made one body with Him.

We are, therefore, a mean between Christ and unbelievers. Christ is the Son of God by essence; unbelievers are so, as it were, spuriously, because, though created by Him, and made after His Image, they are sons by nature, and as if of the bond-woman; they are not so by grace, and as if of the free-woman. They are like Ismael by natural strength, not like Isaac by supernatural grace. We are neither sons by nature like Christ, nor spurious sons like unbelievers, but sons adopted and legitimate; otherwise we could not be the sons of God and joint-heirs of Christ (*Rom.* viii. 17).

Who art in heaven.

The reading of some heretics of "heavenly" for "in heaven" cannot be accepted. It corrupts the force of the text. The Greek ἐν οὐράνοις is against it, as well as our own version. He is called "heavenly" who not only dwells in heaven but derives his origin or comes from heaven like Christ (1 *Cor.* xv. 48-9). It is certain that the habitation of God is what is meant here, who is said to dwell in heaven because, although He is everywhere, yet His glory shines there in a most especial manner (*Psalms* xviii. 6; cxii. 5; cxxii. 1). Aristotle says that it is the opinion of all nations, implanted in them by nature, that God dwells in the heavens (*De Cœlo*, i. 3). Hence the frequent allusions in the Greek poets to the gods who dwell in the realms above.

Hallowed be Thy name.

The name of God is here mentioned, but not His name of God alone by which we address Him, but as we estimate Him, and all that in any way belongs to Him, and which is

said to be sanctified when He is honoured, loved, worshipped, when His glory is magnified, and His goodness, holiness, and majesty are celebrated. The Jews used the word קדש that is, celebrate, as sanctify the Sabbath (*Ezek.* xliv. 24); "Sanctify the fast" (*Joel* i. 14). Or the name of God is said to be sanctified when it is worshipped as holy and honoured, as, on the contrary, it is said to be blasphemed when it is treated without due reverence (*Isa.* lii. 5; *Rom.* ii. 24), and polluted when it is accounted vile and sordid (*Gen.* xx. 30; xxii. 26; xxxvi. 20; xxxix. 7; xliii. 8; *Jerem.* vii. 30). In this sense S. Jerome (in his *Commentaries*) and S. Augustin (lib. ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) explain it. S. Augustin says: "The name of God is not so prayed to in the words 'Hallowed be Thy name,' as if it were not holy, but that it may always be considered so by men; that is, God discovers it to them in such manner that they may not think that there is any holy thing which they should more fear to offend. To the same purport see S. Greg. Nyss. (*De Orat. Dom.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xx.), The Author (*Hom.* xiv.), Theophylact, and Euthymius. S. Ambrose (v. 4, *De Sac.*) says: "Christ calls us sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God we pray that this sanctification may remain in us. When we do not specify any person by whom we wish the name of God to be sanctified, we signify that we wish it sanctified by all." Tertullian (*De Orat.*, ii.) says: "When we do not narrow our meaning by saying, "Hallowed in ourselves," we say "Hallowed in all".

Verse 10. *Thy kingdom come.*

There have been various opinions as to the meaning of the words "Thy kingdom" and "Come" in this passage. Some understand the kingdom of God as that kingdom by which God is said to reign in the hearts of the just, as, on the contrary, sin is said to reign in the bodies of the wicked

(*Rom.* vi. 12), and by S. Luke (xvii. 21). In this sense S. Ambrose (*De Sac.*, iv.), The Author (*Hom.* xiv.), S. Jerome (*Comment.* and *Cont. Pelag.*), S. Greg. Nyss. (*De Orat. Dom.*), and Euthymius. Others take it of that kingdom where Christ reigns in the blessed, as if we prayed that that which has come to the other blessed might come to us, as S. Paul says (*Philipp.* i. 23 and 2 *Tim.* iv. 8; *Titus* ii. 13), and to the souls under the Altar (*Apoc.* vi. 9, 10; Tertullian, S. Cyprian, The Author, *Hom.* xiv.; S. Augustin, *Epistle* cxxi. *to Proba*). Others again, as S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*), paraphrase the words "Thy kingdom come," by "Thy glory be manifested to men".

The true meaning seems to be that which Theophylact and Rupertus suggest. The kingdom of God is that in which, when He has put all enemies under His feet, He will reign universally, and, as S. Paul says, "Be all in all" (1 *Cor.* xv. 28). For, although He now reigns everywhere, yet, as He does not reign peacefully and without enemies or war, and as many like rebels resist Him, He is not said to reign. But when all His enemies are subdued, His friends liberated, and His enemies condemned, He will be said to reign fully. This is clearly deduced from the above passages of S. Paul, from which it is plain that we here ask not for our own kingdom, but for God's; for the first three petitions, as I have said, pertain to God, the others to ourselves. The meaning, therefore, is, not that God may reign in our hearts, nor that we may reign with the blessed, for this applies most especially to ourselves, but that God may reign absolutely and without an enemy. For we say, "Thy kingdom come," as if we were sons praying for a peaceful kingdom and victory over his enemies for the king our father, not that we but he may reign. We wish the kingdom of God to come as they wish it who are spoken of in 2 *Tim.* iv. 8; *Tit.* ii. 13; and in the souls in *Apocalypse* vi. 9.

Thy will be done.

Some think that the meaning of these words is, that the will of God may be done on earth as in heaven—that is, that men on earth may obey Him as the angels do in heaven (S. Jerome; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xx.; The Author, *Hom.* xiv.; S. Augustin, ii., *De Serm. Dom.;* Theophylact; Euthymius).

Others understand it differently, that there may be peace on earth as there is in heaven. For as there was war in heaven between the good and bad angels (*Apoc.* xii. 7), and when the devil was cast out thence peace ensued, so there is now war on earth between the devil and man, and we ask that the devil may be conquered and cast down from earth to the abyss, as Christ says that he shall be (*S. John* xii. 31). Then will come that peace which the angels announced when Christ was born. So S. Ambrose (*De Sac.*, v. 4). Tertullian, however, thinks that the meaning is, that we should have a prompt and ready mind to bear firmly whatever good or ill God may please to send us, as Job did (i. 21). But the general meaning ought not to be restricted as all these explanations restrict it. For it is too little to explain it of the observation of commandments alone, or of peace, or of patience alone. It will balance if all these things are brought into one. The will of God should be done then in all things, not only by us, but in us, as Christ said who could not sin (*S. Luke* xxii. 42): "Not My will but Thine be done" (*S. Luke* xxii. 42); done not only by Him, but in Him.

As in heaven.

Heaven, where nothing resists God, and where is nothing that is not obedient to His will (*Ps.* cii. 20, 21).

Verse 11. *Our supersubstantial bread.*

A fruitful passage as treating of bread, but one rendered difficult by the obscurity of expression and the variety of

interpretations. Many ancient authors have said piously, and religiously, and in accordance with the use of the Church, that the body of Christ is termed our daily bread. For it is the true bread "which cometh down from heaven," and it is taken daily either by individuals or by the whole Church (Tertullian, *De Orat.;* S. Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.;* S. Ambrose, *De Sac.*, v. 4; S. Athanasius, *De Incarn.;* Juvencus; S. Jerome, *In Comment.*, and iii., *Adv. Pelag.*). It is not the least of the arguments in favour of this view that it appears probable that in so perfect and divine an address Christ would not have taught anything earthly, anything not divine. On the other hand, the words, "Give us this day," cause a difficulty, as if we were forbidden to ask for to-morrow, as in verse 34. Again, we seem to ask, as a thing necessary every day for each of us, for the Body of Christ; which is indeed most beneficial to us every day, but not necessary, nor, as S. Augustin says, was it taken by the Eastern Christians of his time every day. This induced him (lib. ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) to say that our daily bread meant the will of God, as Christ said (*S. John* iv. 34; vi. 27). This view was held by Origen (*Hom. in Ezek.* xiv.) before him. But Christ taught us to seek that food not only for this day, but for every day of our lives, as the people said (*S. John* vi. 34), and the woman (iv. 15). It is more probable that, as said by S. Augustin (i., *In Gen.* xxxix., and *To Proba,* ccxxi. 12), S. Basil (*In Reg. Brev.*, cclii.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xx.), The Author (*Hom.* xiv.), S. Greg. Nyss. (*De Orat.*), Theodoret (*On Philipp.*, chap. iv.), all food necessary to life is here termed our daily bread, and that by the word "bread" everything requisite for the support of life ought to be understood. This is evident from all the "circumstances" of the text. (1) As it is ours, that is, necessary to us; (2) as it is daily, that is, not superfluous; (3) as it is for to-day, not for the future; (4) as we are forbidden in verse 34, in the same sense, to

be anxious for the morrow. All these circumstances show that the subject is the food of the body. "But it is not likely," some say, "that Christ taught us in so heavenly a discourse to seek for anything earthly." The answer is that it was not the will of Christ to direct us to seek bread and things necessary to life—which are earthly, which Christ Himself (verse 25) forbids, and to which we are all sufficiently prone by nature—but to teach us whence and how we should seek it, as not from the earth like cattle, but from God, as men; and not for all time, but for the present day alone. For this is a heavenly precept, not an earthly one, and so heavenly that few obey it even with Christ as their teacher. The improbability that Christ should have preferred even moderate care of the body to that of the soul may add force to this argument. But He did this, if, among the things which we ask for ourselves, He put bread in the first place, the forgiveness of sins in the second, and freedom from temptation in the third. Christ did not see fit to follow so much the dignity of things, as that of nature and our weakness. Nature would first have us live, and then live well. Christ considered this; and when He taught us to ask for bread, He thought not so much of the body as of the soul, for he cut off the greatest and strongest source of sin. In a word, by this petition He takes care, in the first place, that sins be not committed; and, in the second, when committed, how they may best be put away.

Our.

They who understand by "bread" the Body of Christ, explain, like S. Cyprian, the word "our" as meaning the faithful, and not the unbelieving; others understand "our" as "a thing given to us by God," as S. Gregory (*Moral*, xxxiii. 5): "See we both call it ours, and pray that it may be given to us. It is ours indeed when we have received

it, but God's when He gives it. It is therefore God's as by a gift, it is ours by reception. Others think it ours, as being the possession of us as men, and not cattle. Others, again, would have the actual object which we possess already to be called ours, but which we are not the less ordered to ask of God, because, as it is really God's rather than our own, we ought not to use it before we ask His permission to do so." Thus speaks The Author—a true and pious thought indeed, but seemingly foreign to the argument. For Christ wished to correct the wickedness of those who set no bounds to their covetousness, as is clear from verse 19 and the following. For men, if wicked, do not seek what they have already by their own exertion (*ex industria*), nor ask it of God, if good.

As, then, we ask for the bread which we have not, why do the rich ask for it? S. Augustin has both raised this question and answered it: "Poor men ask that they may receive, rich men that they may not lose. And what," he continues, "does the rich man want? I dare to say that the rich man wants his daily bread. Why, then, do these abound in all things, except that God has given it to them? What would they have if God were to withdraw His hand? Have not many gone to sleep rich, and they wake up poor?" We may thus understand it, that the bread which is necessary to us may be called "ours". This agrees well with the intention of Christ, who only pleased to give us the power of asking for the supply of our needs of the present day.

Daily—Folio, *Quotidianum; Supersubstantialis*—8vo, *Supersubstantial.*

The difference between the folio and 8vo in their commentaries on the first part of this verse is so great, that the best plan appears to be to give a translation of each.

FOLIO.

The Greek word *ἐπιούσιον* has caused much difficulty.

8VO.

The Greek word *ἐπιούσιον*, found in this place, as well as in *S. Luke* xi. 2, here rendered "supersubstantial," there "daily," we have in our corrected edition. It cannot be doubted that supersubstantial ought to be read here, yet the ancient translator rendered *τὸν ἐπιούσιον* "daily," as is clear from S. Jerome; and all the ancient Latin authors so read it. S. Jerome, however, substituted "supersubstantial," although in so doing he did not desire to correct the ancient version.

FOLIO.

Some have therefore incautiously, in our time, put "supersubstantial" for "daily," into our Vulgate Edition. This word ill agrees with that bodily food which, as we have proved, is asked by us.

Others have rendered it "consubstantial," that is, of the same essence as our own — that word about which there was so great a controversy, subsequently, with the Arians. S. Jerome says that he found מחר "to-morrow's," in the Gospel of the Hebrews, instead of

8VO.

The Church afterwards followed him in his correction. Although, as in *S. Luke*, the word is rendered "daily," she here seems to confirm that ancient reading as well, or, at least, by no means to repudiate it.

ἐπιούσιον, as if there were an antithesis between to-morrow's needful bread. Such a verbal antithesis harmonises well, but the sense does not, for Christ does not teach, but forbid, us to take thought for the morrow. Others render ἐπιούσιον, "of our substance," adapted to our support, that is, ordinary household bread (*panis cibarius*), not delicate, nor superfluous. This, too, agrees not ill with the text. But nothing seems to me so appropriate as our word "daily," as read with what follows: "Give us this day". For there is no verbal antithesis, which some seek where none is to be found, but a kinship and resemblance of statement; as if Christ had said in conjoined words, "our daily bread"—that is, Give us this day the bread that is necessary for us for this day's use. But Christ said "our daily" rather than "this day's" bread, that the meaning might be more general, and show that God is wont to give to His servants, each day, the bread which is necessary for them. The Latins term it *diarium*, a daily allowance of food. We ask, therefore, that our *diarium* of to-day may not fail. We speak as young children who, when they go to their school in the morning, ask firstly for their appointed portion of bread for the day. The Syriac agrees with this. For "our daily bread" it reads ܠܚܡܐ ܕܣܘܟܢܢ ܝܗܒ ܠܢ "Give us the bread of our necessity".

It may be said that one point still remains. The word ἐπιούσιος is not derived from the participle οὖσα, "being," but from the substantive οὐσία, like ὁμοούσιος and ὁμοιούσιος. If so, it may still mean not the food of the present day, but substantial, or supersubstantial, or that which pertains to the substance, termed in Greek οὐσία. I reply: The Evangelist or his translator was allowed to use a new word, or an old one with a new meaning, as the Apostles often do. Again, the expression seems to savour of a Hebraism; for the Jews speak of עצם היום הזה "the substance of

this day," for the day itself, as in *Gen.* vii. 11 ; *Levit.* xxiii. 14. Thus, then, the Evangelist could use the word ἐπιούσιος, which pertains to the substance of the present day ; that is, to the portion of bread which answers to the present day. Let this suggestion, however, be subject to the approbation of the more learned.

Verse 12. *And forgive us our debts.*

We call our sins "debts" because we are bound by them to God as if by a debt. This is clear from *S. Luke* xi. 4, which for debts has sins ; and from the parable which follows (xviii. 27) we have explained the meaning of "remission of sins" on *Rom.* iv. 8. We will only say now that the words mean not that our sins are merely not imputed to us ; nor that they are only dissembled ; nor only concealed ; nor only not punished, as modern heretics say, but that they are wholly taken away ; wholly blotted out and cast into the sea, as Scripture says (*S. John* i. 9 ; *Isaiah* xliii. 25 ; *Mich.* vii. 19). From this passage the ancient Catholics proved against the Pelagians that no one in this life is without sin, for we are all commanded to say, "Forgive us" (S. Jerome, iii., *Adv. Pelag.;* S. Augustin, ii., *Cont. Epist. Parm.* 10 ; iii., *Cont. duas Epist. Pelag.* 5 ; iii. 5, *Cont. duas Epist. Pelag.;* iii., *De Peccat. mer.* 13 ; *Epist.* lxxxix. ; *Hom.* xlii.).

The Pelagians replied in two manners : (1) That the holy men who use these words pray, not for themselves, but for others (S. Augustin, ii. 10, *De Peccat. merit.*) ; (2) that they use them, not in truth, but in modesty and humility (S. Augustin, ii. 10, *Cont. duas. Epist. Parm.*, in which he replies to the same passages).

As we also forgive our debtors.

Christ appears to give us a dangerous law, for we shall be in an evil plight if God do not forgive us our sins on

another scale to that on which we forgive our debtors. But this is not a law, but a condition. This is clear from the fact that God forgives us both far more and far greater sins, and more bountifully and freely, and that to us who deserve much less than we either do or can forgive our debtors. If, therefore, this were a law, we should pray to God, not for our salvation, but rather for our condemnation. We learn this from the parable (xviii. 24, 28) in which the Lord forgave the servant 10,000 talents, while the servant would not forgive his fellow-servant the 100 pence. The lord did not forgive it because the servant had first forgiven his fellow, as if he had been urged on by his example, but he forgave first, and the servant would not forgive afterwards. Lastly, a law is that which we follow; but God does not follow us, but we follow Him in forgiving offences. We are not, therefore, a law to Him, but He is a law to us. We are a condition to Him, and if by this we do not forgive our debtors, neither will He forgive us. This is seen from chap. v. 23, 24; *S. Mark* xi. 25; and *S. Luke* xi. 4. S. Luke does not say forgive us our debts *as* we also forgive our debtors, but *because* we also forgive.

But why did Christ add this, not rule, but condition, when it might appear rather to hinder than assist the attainment of that faith for which we pray? For two reasons: (1) For the correction of our prayers, lest we ask of God that which we are ourselves unwilling to grant to others; and (2) for a warning to us, that what we ask of God we should be ready to grant in our turn.

It remains to see how the rule is to be understood. Some heretics of old took it to mean that, however much men sinned, and in whatever manner they lived, if they only forgave the wrongs done to them, they might be sure that God would forgive them their sins. S. Augustin (*De Civit.*, xxi. 22, 27) replies: "We say,

'Forgive us our sins,' not that sins may be, but because they are, committed (*non ut fiant sed quia fiunt*), as we also forgive our debtors".

The meaning, then, is not that God will forgive us on the sole condition that we forgive others, but that unless we do this He will not forgive us, as is said in verse 15. Hence verse 14 is not to be understood, as S. Augustin has warned us, absolutely, but if other conditions are added: if we repent of past sins, if we resolve not to sin again, and if there is anything else required for the remission of sins. For, to say it once for all, there is this difference between promises or conditions negative and affirmative, that the former deny absolutely and without any superadded conditions; the latter are never understood absolutely, but with an exception, unless some other cause prevent. S. Mark (xvi. 26) gives in one and the same passage a notable example of each rule: "He that believeth not shall be damned". This promise, because it is negative, is to be understood absolutely and without any qualification; it will be that whoever does not believe, however well he lives, or whatever he does, will be damned. The words of the same verse: "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved," because it is an affirmation, is not to be understood absolutely and without qualification, but with other necessary conditions. So, in this place, what is said in verse 15, because it is said negatively, is to be taken absolutely; but verse 14, because it is affirmative, is to be understood, not absolutely, but with an exception.

S. Augustin gives another but too confined an explanation—that we should forgive our debtors if they ask us, as we ask God to forgive us, and as the servant asked his fellow-servant: "Have patience with me". This explanation binds the meaning and loosens the conscience too much. For we are commanded to forgive, not only if we

are asked, but of our own free-will, when we stand praying, if we have anything against any man (*S. Mark* xi. 25). S. Augustin himself seems to have understood it of all things, and generally and without restriction (*Serm. in Mont.* xi.).

It is a more difficult question how far we ought to forgive our debtors that God may forgive us, and one which has given rise to much discussion. Suffice it to say, briefly, what may seem necessary to the understanding of the words. The passage is not to be understood of all debts, but of private injuries alone. You owe me a thousand gold pieces; if I do not forgive you, God will not forgive me my sins? Not so by any means. If I forgive you, I do you a benefit. If I do not forgive you, I commit no sin. Nor does the parable of the king and his servants (*S. Matt.* xviii. 24) offer any difficulty. For by the debts are signified our sins. You have killed my father; am I necessarily to do nothing if I wish that God may require nothing of me? By no means. You have dishonoured me by a false accusation; is it not lawful for me to seek redress before the judge? It is lawful. What then? We must forgive an injury, but not a loss, if we wish God to forgive our injuries done to Him. The Doctors of the Church raise a subtle distinction between an injury and a loss. When you killed my father, you both did me an injury and inflicted on me a loss: an injury because you offended and despised me; a loss because you deprived me of him who supported, taught, protected me. I may seek redress for the loss; I am bound to forgive the injury, so that afterwards I wish you no evil, entertain no enmity towards you, seek no revenge. The same is to be understood in other cases.

Verse 13. *And lead us not into temptation.*

Two things must here be explained—What temptation is, and what it is to be led into temptation. The Pelagians

understood not that contention of sinners with us which Scripture calls temptation, but those human accidents which we cannot escape of ourselves (*per nos*) unless God keep them from us (S. Augustin, *Ep.* xciv.). Their error was to think that we could avoid all sin of our own strength, and though aided by no grace of God. They were urged by Catholics with this text, as showing that we ask God not to lead us into temptation, as we are not able, without His aid to overcome. So say S. Jerome (iii., *Adv. Pelag.*) and S. Augustin (*passim*). The Pelagians sought this explanation as a loophole by which to escape. But they are easily answered by the next verse, "Deliver us from evil," where, as shall shortly be explained, we can only understand the devil: as also from xxvi. 41, where it is certain that Christ is speaking of the temptation of sinners.

The opinion of all Catholics on sin has always been true and firm, that God tempts not by impelling, or inciting, but by permitting, as is taught by Tertullian and S. Cyprian (*Lib. de Orat. Dom.*), S. Augustin (*Serm.* cxxiv. *de Temp.*), and elsewhere. This is plain. What it is, that God does not permit us to be led into temptation, is not so plain. Some take it to mean, not that we may not fall into temptation, which, as long as we are in the body cannot be avoided, but that when we fall into it we may not be overcome by it, as S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*, and *Ep.* cxxi.) and Theophylact (*in loc.*). It appears better, as S. Augustin (*Lib. de Bon. Persev.*, vi.), Tertullian, S. Cyprian (*De Orat. Dom.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xx.), The Author, and Euthymius think, that we ask not to fall into temptation, for, knowing our own infirmities, we not only do not ask to conquer, but not to come into the contest, lest we be overcome. This is certainly the meaning of the words of Christ (xxvi. 41). Let us therefore avoid the combat, like Christ—but we contend with the devil; He contended with death.

But deliver us from evil.

S. Cyprian understood this of all evil generally, whether sin or anything whatever that causes us harm. Others refer it to temptation, as if the meaning were, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from it," as said by S. Augustin (ii. 4, *De merit. Peccat.*, and ii., *Serm. in Mont.*) and The Author (*Hom.* xiv.), which hardly seems to agree with the opinion of S. Augustin, mentioned on verse 9, that there were seven petitions contained in the Lord's Prayer; for "Lead us not into temptation" and "Deliver us from evil" would then be the same, unless we ask in the former that we may not run into temptation, and in the latter that if we do we may be delivered from it. But this is a distinction over subtle.

Tertullian seems more correct, that by evil we are to understand the devil. "Whoever," he says, "is tempted by the devil has shown the author and contriver of temptation" (*De Orat.*), an opinion approved by S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xx.) and his followers, Theophylact and Euthymius. In support of this view is also the word πόνηρος, as in v. 37, xiii. 19, with the article ὁ, which clearly points to the evil one.

S. Augustin (ii. 4, *De Peccat.*) shows, as Tertullian had done before him, that these petitions are classed in such order that in the first we ask that our past sins may be forgiven; in the second, that we may not fall into danger for the future; in the third, that we may be freed from present perils. "Christ," says Tertullian, "added, to complete all, that we should pray not merely for the forgiveness of past faults, but also for their punishment being wholly averted from us for the future."

For thine is the kingdom.

The Greek adds: "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

As we have not these words in our version, we do not use them in our prayers. For this we are accused partly of ignorance and partly of falsehood, as if we mutilated the Lord's Prayer. But as others had observed before, we have not taken from the prayer, but the Greeks have added to it. It is probable that they added these words to the context, as they added to the Angelic Salutation, "For thou hast brought forth the Saviour," and as they added the *Gloria* to the Psalms. It is also quite in accordance with the custom of the Greeks, who used to close their assemblies with the words, "For Thine is the strength, and glory, and kingdom," or the like, as we read in S. Chrysostom and other Greeks. In confirmation of this conjecture is the fact that the words in question are not found in the most ancient authorities. Yet Tertullian and S. Cyprian used Greek copies in preference to Latin, especially when the two differed, and S. Jerome, who corrected the Latin versions to the Greek, neither translated these words, nor explained them in his Commentaries. Nor is it probable that Christ, in a prayer so short and precise, should have added anything not necessary. It must be admitted that the Greeks, S. Chrysostom, The Author, Theophylact, and Euthymius read the words, and that they are found in the Hebrew and Syriac. But the Greeks read from the use of their Church, as the Hebrew, because the Greek contains them. What authority the Hebrew Gospel has, we have stated in the Preface. It is probable that the Syriac is a translation of the Greek, unless the Syrians have added the words from a similar form.

Verses 14, 15. *For if you will forgive men.*

Whatever difficulty there may be in these two verses has been explained on verse 12. There is here an antithesis between man and God. "If," the Evangelist says, "you will forgive men," that is, your equals, your fellow-servants,

as in the parable of the debtors (xviii. 28, 29). For man ought to forgive man, a servant his fellow-servant, rather than God forgive man, the lord his servant. For as man is mortal, he ought not to cherish immortal hatred; and as an offence to an equal is less than one to a superior, especially when the offence is to the highest from the lowest, we are commanded to do the less that we may gain the greater, and to forgive our fellow-servants a hundred pence, that the 10,000 talents may be forgiven us by God. This is the force, in the present passage, of the word "men". So *Ecclus.* xxviii. 1-5.

Verse 16. *As the hypocrites—sad.*

On hypocrites, see verse 2. Sad, σκυθρώποι, sad-visaged —not from true sorrow but, says S. Jerome, from their simulation of sorrow and sanctity.

Disfigure.

S. Jerome did not render it thus, but the ancient translator before him, as is clear from S. Hilary (*Can.* v.) and S. Augustin (ii., *Serm. Dom.*). S. Jerome thinks that it ought to be rendered "demolish" *(demoliuntur)*, and chides the ancient author—for this even is hardly correct. S. Hilary reads more correctly "disguise," "make up" (*conficiunt*); S. Chrysostom, "corrupt," διαφθείρουσι; others more properly, "obscure," "darken". The meaning is that the hypocrites, that they may appear to fast, change their natural and ruddy complexion, either from pretence of sadness, or by means of chemical applications, into a pale and sullen hue, contrarily to the custom of women, to appear more attractive.

Their reward.

See what has been said on verses 1, 2, 5.

Verse 17. *But thou.*

Here is a change of number and person as in verse 21. According to the Jewish custom (4 *Kings* xvii. 29), the inhabitants of Palestine, as S. Jerome says on this passage, anoint their heads on festival days. Nor these alone, but all Orientals, in token of joy and prosperity, do the same. From this we may understand *Ruth* iii. 3; 2 *Kings* xii. 20; xiv. 2; 4 *Kings* iv. 2; *Judith* x. 3; xvi. 10; *Esther* ii. 12. How we are to understand the order to us to anoint our heads when we fast, is correctly explained by S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxi.), The Author, S. Jerome, Theophylact, Euthymius, Rupertus. Christ would not have us literally anoint our heads, but, that we may escape the appearance of fasting, and rather assume joy and mirth like those who anoint their heads, than sadness, as above (verse 3): "Let not thy left hand," and (verse 6): "Enter into thy chamber".

Verse 19. *Lay not up to yourselves treasures.*

It is the custom of the ancient translator, in commands of this class, which are negative, to add "Nolite," giving the sense but not the words, as below (verse 34, and vii. 1, 2). What Christ meant by "treasure" is not very clear. S. Hilary takes it to mean praise of men, which, in verses 2, 5, 16, He calls reward, that which they who pursue it lay up as treasure, not in heaven with God, but on earth among men. Others understand it better of earthly riches. This verse 24 confirms.

Verse 21. *Thy treasure.*

The Greek is "your,"—as below, "your heart". Our version seems preferable; for S. Chrysostom and The Author, both of them Greeks, so read it, and this change of number in an assembly has greater force, as in verse 17. It seems to have been a proverb, as taken from the mean *(de medio)*,

like many other passages, both in this and in verse 24: "You cannot serve God and mammon".

Verse 22. *The light of thy body.*

The Greek does not read "thy". This word, however, seems to have the greater force; the more so as in the verse preceding Christ had begun to use the second person, and in that following He said: "If thine eye be single". So SS. Hilary, Ambrose (*De dig. Sacerd.*, vi.), Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*), and, among the Greeks, The Author. But we may doubt how the words apply, and what is their connection with what has gone before. S. Chrysostom and The Author unite them thus: "Christ had said before, 'Where thy treasure is'. The heart is to the mind what the eye is to the body; Christ says then, from the comparison of the eye of the body, that the mind cannot be right, when the heart is intent upon riches and blinded by avarice."

If thy eye be single thy whole body shall be lightsome.

Si ergo. The word *ergo* here is not, as some think, an illative conjunction, but inceptive, or continuative. If the eye be pure, clean, not affected by humours, the body will be as if all eye. For the eye, which is a very small member, gives the light which is so necessary to the body; so that when the eye is pure, almost the whole body appears to be an eye, for all the members see how to perform their functions through the eye.

Verse 23. *But if thine eye be evil.*

Of evil affection, vicious, impure. It is opposed to single (*simplex*).

The light that is in thee be darkness.

Si ergo. οὖν for γάρ, the reason being given—How can light be darkness, or how, if darkness, can it be called light. Not because it is, but because it ought to be, such

as *S. Matthew* viii. 12, that is, they who ought to be the sons of the kingdom; and *S. Luke* vii. 35: By those who ought to be her children.

The darkness itself, how great shall it be?

The other members of the body, which, in their own nature, are darkness, because they have no light but from the eye.

Verse 24. *No man can serve two masters.*

Whither does this tend? S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxii.) and The Author (*Hom.* xvi.) answer: Christ had said in verse 19, "Lay not up," which, He shows, we cannot do, because we cannot serve God and mammon. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxii.) and Theophylact show how it is to be understood, and that no one can serve two masters who give contrary commands, as God and mammon. This is no doubt true, but Christ gives another reason: "He will hate," &c. The words show that no one can have two masters, issuing, not merely different, but even contradictory orders. For nature herself forbids the love of a servant to be divided between two masters; as if Christ had said, "No woman can have two husbands," not only because they would give contrary directions, but because conjugal love is of such a nature in itself as to be the possession of one husband alone. Thus one master can have many servants, but one servant cannot have many masters; for the master does not love but direct the servant; the servant does not direct but love his master; and while command can be divided, love cannot. Christ therefore teaches us that riches, not only when wickedly gained and unjustly dispensed, but when both rightly gained and justly dispensed, if loved, call men off from the love of God. For no one is able to love two masters, or, as Christ said elsewhere, "It is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (xix. 26). The Author

(*Hom.* xvi.) says: "Christ did not say, No man can have two masters, but no man can serve two masters". Everything to which we are too much inclined, and to which we are in a manner servants, He calls our master (as S. Paul, *Rom.* vi. 16; 2 *Pet.* ii. 19), and whoever is overcome by it is its servant (S. Basil, *Reg.*, ii. 1).

For either he will hate the one.

"The one" is here taken for the first, "the other" for the second, a very common and well-known Hebraism. Specify therefore two masters, whom you will, Peter and Paul, either he will hate the one, that is, the first, Peter, and love the other, that is, the second, Paul; or he will sustain the one, that is, Peter, and he will despise the other, that is, the second, Paul. In a word, Christ does not oppose the one person to the other, but the hatred of the one to the love of the other. There is a similar expression in *S. Luke* xvi. 13.

You cannot serve God and mammon.

Riches are called ממונא Mammon in Chaldaic; Mammona in Syriac; and Elias in Theto says: "The Punic, which is akin to them, employs the same term"; as S. Augustin says (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*, and *Serm.* xxxv. *in verb. Dom. sec. Luc.*).

Verse 25. *For your life.*

"Life" (*anima*) is here put for one part of the man, as is clear from the other part being opposed to it: "Nor for your body what you shall put on"; but because our life consists of that part, *anima* is put for it, according to the custom of the Hebrews, as S. Augustin says, and as will be seen on x. 39; xvi. 25; *S. John* xiii. 37, 38; xv. 13; and other places innumerable.

Nor for your body.

Christ mentions the two things that are most especially

valued by men, and about which they are apt to be the most anxious, because all life consists of them. He forbids us to be anxious about them. But He does not forbid every kind of anxiety: but that alone, in fact, which springs from want of trust in God (as in verses 26, 28, 30), and which takes men off from the service of God (as in verse 24). Lastly, He does not disapprove of all kinds of anxiety, but of that which the servant has towards his master. For He speaks in accordance with what He had said in verse 24.

Is not the life more than the meat?

We may rightly question to what this tends. S. Jerome, S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxii.), The Author (*Hom.* xvi.), Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius, Strabus, think that it has this following meaning: "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? For who gives us our life and body but God? He, therefore, who has given us the greater, will also give us the less." So 1 *Peter* v. 7. This is confirmed by verses 26-30.

Verse 26. *Behold the birds of the air.*

There seems to be three chief reasons why Christ named birds rather than other creatures. 1. He wished to give us examples of Divine Providence, as it were, throughout the whole universe, and He therefore begins from heaven with birds, and ends with earth. 2. When the birds are flying above, they are at a distance from all food, and yet God feeds them. 3. Terrestrial animals are more occupied in obtaining and storing up food; and therefore Solomon, that we may learn to be provident and busy, sends us to the ant (*Prov.* vi. 6; xxx. 25).

Of the air.

These words have the same sense as the above. For there are domestic fowls which obtain their support from the care of man, but the fowls of the air are fed by God

alone. S. Luke (xii. 24) specifies the ravens because, as some think, the young of the raven, as soon as they are hatched, are deserted by the parent birds, that they may depend upon the providence of God alone. It is, therefore, said expressly of the ravens that God provides food for them. (*Job* xxxviii. 11; *Ps.* cxlvi. 9).

And your Heavenly Father feedeth them.

Christ does not say "their Father," but "your Father". As if He had said: If God most carefully provides for these creatures, though they are of little account, and He is not their Father, how much more will He feed you, who are men, and His sons? "Christ," says S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxii.), "might have brought examples of Divine Providence in Elias and John Baptist. Moses was supported forty days without food (*Exod.* xxiv. 18); Elias was fed by a raven, the most voracious of birds (3 *Kings* xvii. 46); John lived in the desert, without thought or care for his life and clothing (iii. 4). But Christ desired to show that Divine Providence extends even to the least and meanest of creatures, and that it is not true that the heavens are closed up, as the foolish companions of Job said (xxii. 14)."

Verse 27. *One cubit.*

The meaning of these words is plain from *S. Luke* xii. 26, by which, if we would rightly understand the passage, we must interpret them. It is clear that Christ was proceeding from the greater to the less. He calls the addition of the cubit, therefore, the least thing, not as in comparison with food, or drink, or clothing (for it is, undoubtedly, greater and more difficult to add, I do not say one cubit, but one hair to our bodies than to provide food and clothing), but in comparison with the whole body and life, as The Author well observes. Christ, therefore, by these words, proves the minor proposition of His former argument, which He had before suppressed. For He had said:

"The life is more than the meat, and the body than the clothing"—but (understand) not you, but God makes the life and body. Not you, therefore, but God should provide food and raiment. He now goes on to prove that part of the minor proposition: You cannot make the life and body. You cannot make one cubit, much less the whole.

Verse 28. *The lilies of the field.*

As Christ had said before, not merely "the fowls," but "the fowls of the air," so He here says, not "the lilies," but "the lilies of the field," to distinguish them from the lilies of the garden, which are planted and cultivated by man. Christ by this example appears to teach that God pleases to take care, not only for the necessaries but also for the comforts and refinements of life, that we may not be anxious even for these: as fathers provide not only that their children should not want, not merely the means of life and education, but those of ordinary refinement and necessary recreation as well.

What Christ teaches in these words He had already taught in fact in clothing the Israelites for forty years in the desert (*Deut.* vii. 4).

Verse 29. *Not even Solomon.*

Christ named Solomon rather than any other king, because he excelled all who had gone before, and all who followed him, in riches, power, and glory (3 *Kings* iii. 13), by which all that pertains to the ornament of the person is studied and invented.

In all his glory.

Some read "with" for "in," but the alteration is not required, and it destroys the force of the sentence. The meaning is not, as these suppose, that Solomon, however great and glorious, could not be clothed in such splendour, but that not Solomon himself, even when so clothed, and

at the highest point of his grandeur, could be arrayed in such a manner. Our present version, therefore, is the better.

Verse 30. *And if the grass.*

Two opposite qualities of the lily are here dwelt upon—their great beauty and their entire uselessness : their beauty as to be preferred to the glory of Solomon ; their uselessness to show that there is nothing so mean and profitless but God takes the utmost care of it. When speaking of their beauty, Christ calls them "lilies" ; when of their uselessness, "hay". Scripture constantly compares what is most useless and of the shortest duration to hay (*Ps.* xxxvi. 2 ; lxxi. 16 ; *Ecclus.* xiv. 8 ; *Isaiah* xxxvii. 27 ; xl. 6).

Verse 33. *Seek ye therefore.*

Be anxious for the kingdom of God ; so verses 25, 28, 31. Christ opposes one kind of solicitude to another—the necessary to the useless, the good to the bad. The Greek δέ refers not to the latter class, but to the former—the kingdom of God.

First.

We must understand "first" as "only" ; for we are not to seek in the "second" place that which we are forbidden to seek at all. Christ did not wholly forbid us to seek other things, but *so* to seek them that our care for them should not take us from seeking the kingdom of God, or allow them to make us their slaves (verse 24). Christ has not forbidden : He has taught us to seek these things for the kingdom of God's sake ; for, in the Lord's Prayer, after the words, "Thy kingdom come," we are to say, "Give us this day," and, as if to show what the meaning is, "Seek ye first," &c. So say S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiii.) and Euthymius.

To the words that follow, "And all these things shall be added unto you," it has been objected, as if we were not to

enquire, not to be anxious, not to seek. The addition is made because the things are not sought in the first place. But what is not sought in the first place, and for its own sake, but in the second place, and for the sake of God, does not seem to be sought at all, because the thing itself is not sought, but God is sought in it. Moreover, "these things" are often added by God, even when we do not seek them or think of them, as shall be shown hereafter.

The kingdom of God.

S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and others understand this as the kingdom spoken of in verse 10; which would agree well, were it not evident that the subject here is not what we ask for God's sake, but for ourselves, and did not the words, "His righteousness," immediately follow. It is certain that we should seek this, not for God, but for ourselves. It has been explained of a life of happiness, as if Christ had said: "Study first to come to the kingdom of God" (The Author, *Hom.* xvi.; Bede, Euthymius, *Comment.*). We may receive the words, "The kingdom of God," as the grace of God, which we ought to seek in the first place as the life of our souls, as in *S. Luke* xvii. 21.

And his justice.

God's justice is so called as that which God has commanded of us. As if it had been said: "Take heed, first to do the will of God, and observe His commandments," as Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have walked in all the "justifications," that is, in the commandments of God (*S. Luke* i. 26). We must understand the "kingdom of God" by the explanation of S. Paul (*Rom.* iv. 17).

All these things shall be added unto you.

This seems to be a metaphor taken from things of little value, which, on the purchase of articles of price, are not reckoned, but given as make-weights. Solomon is an

example, when he asked not wealth, nor glory, nor power. but wisdom to govern the people of God ; that is, when he sought the kingdom of God alone, he had other things for which he had not asked given to him (3 *Kings* iii. 13). Similar expressions are often found in the *Psalms* (xxiii. 11 ; cx. 5).

Verse 34. *Be not therefore.*

The comparison of the fowls of heaven and the lilies of the field, which are not anxious, and yet God feeds and clothes them, has the same force. We then, His sons, should not be thus anxious ; as that for which we most take thought is added to all who dismiss such cares, and seek only the kingdom of God. Be not solicitous, torment not yourselves without cause, spare your anxiety, for, " Sufficient unto the day ".

For the morrow.

The words show that we may be allowed to have some care for to-day, but rather that of asking from God than of seeking by our own labour. The allusion seems to be to verse 11 (*S. Luke* xii. 29). Be not causelessly anxious for the distant future, do not discuss what is afar off ; as astronomers when they study the heavens, and as they who are described by S. James (iv. 13). To-morrow is put, according to Hebrew custom, for the future, as S. Hilary and S. Jerome have observed, and as is seen in *Gen.* xxx. 38.

The morrow will be solicitous for itself.

Solicitous for the things which pertain to it ; that is, it will cause sufficient anxiety in the search of that which, when it comes, will be necessary for it. Christ speaks, as S. Chrysostom says (*Hom.* xxiii.), of the day, a thing inanimate, by *prosopopœia*, as if it could feel anxiety, or, as rather appears by the metonymy by which death is

called "pale," because it makes men so. In this sense day is said to be anxious for its own things, because it makes us anxious for them.

The evil thereof.

The solicitude of which Christ speaks, and which He calls "evil," that is, affliction and vexation; as Tertullian (ii., *Against Marcion*), S. Jerome (*Comment.*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiii.), S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*), Euthymius, and Theophylact explain it. S. Jerome says that κάκια, "evil," is put for κάκωσις, "a state of evil". The question remains of the truth of the saying, *how* Christ forbids us to be anxious for the morrow, when He Himself had a purse (*S. John* xii. 6; xiii. 29); so that He seems to have been solicitous, not only for the morrow, but for more days to come. Joseph, too, a man of evangelical piety, was careful for seven years to come, and was much praised for his foresight (*Gen.* xli. 39-48); and the Apostles were careful to prepare means for their future sustenance (*Acts* xi. 29); and Solomon, to teach us forethought and carefulness, refers us to the ant (*Prov.* vi. 6; xxx. 25). If we are not to have any kind of anxiety for the morrow, we must not plant or sow, for these cannot exist without it. S. Augustin replies that by "to-morrow" are meant those other temporal goods which we ought not to seek. That we can, and, at times, even ought to be anxious about temporal goods, has been proved before. The Author explains the being anxious for the morrow to mean "anxiety for what is not necessary". But Christ speaks even of these; even of the necessaries of life, of food and clothing (verses 26, 28, 31). Former examples have shown that every kind of solicitude for the future is not forbidden, but that which is forbidden is to be gathered out of the entire chapter.

1. Whatever hinders us from seeking the kingdom of God is forbidden.

2. Whatever springs from distrust of God.

3. Whatever does not follow but precedes anxiety for the kingdom of God; which we ought to seek in the first place, and which is of so great consequence, that we ought to be its servants, we who cannot serve two masters (verse 24).

CHAPTER VII.

THE THIRD PART OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Verse 1. (*Judge*) *not*—"*Nolite*".

WE must first enquire by what link this chapter is connected with the last. S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) thinks that Christ, having, in the former chapter, prohibited undue anxiety about temporal things, now cautions those who are not guilty of this fault not to judge harshly those who are so, as the things in question may be sought either from a good or a bad motive, and they should think kindly of persons. So S. Paul (1 *Cor.* viii.) forbade Christian converts to eat meat offered to idols, yet would not allow those who ate not to judge the others; because they might do it in ignorance or with a good intention. So, again, *Rom.* xiv. 3. The Author would have this chapter united to the others; for Christ had said (vi. 12-14): "Forgive us our debts," &c.

It has been said that we should not look critically for a connection in the sayings of the Evangelists, for they did not care to record events in the order in which they occurred or were spoken of by Christ. This must be especially observed in regard to those assemblies in which they do not relate all the sayings of Christ, nor the order in which He spoke them, but are content to give the heads of His teaching. If we may offer a conjecture from the resemblance of the argument, it is probable that the contents of this chapter were not delivered in a general

assembly of the people, but in the private address to the Apostles mentioned by S. Matthew (v.), and they are to be taken with verse 48 of that chapter. In this way verse agrees with verse, and word with word; and, moreover, S. Luke (vi. 36, 37) so connects them.

Judge.

The meaning is, according to S. Hilary (*Can.* v.) and S. Ambrose (*De Paradiso*, chap. v.): "Judge not of the judgments and promises of God, lest you be judged by Him". So *S. James* iv. 11. Others, as The Author (*Hom.* xvii.), would have us not to be severe against our neighbours, and treasure up in our hearts any injuries they may have done us. Euthymius and Theophylact think that not only the condemnation of others is prohibited, but even the judging of them. (S. Augustin, *Serm. Dom.* ii., *Serm. de Temp.* cii.; S. Basil, *Reg. brev.* clxiv.; S. Jerome, *Comm.*; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxiv.; Anastasius, *Quæst.* 88; Bede; Rupertus.) It appears probable that not only judgment, but all curious enquiry into the lives of others is forbidden; because Christ thus places judgment before condemnation, as legal enquiry precedes sentence. For what follows, "Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned," is not an explanation of the same sentence, as many take it to be, but, as we shall shortly show, another sentence.

S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Anastasius, Augustin, Bede, Euthymius, ask "how Christ forbids us to judge others when their sins are so flagrant that we are unable not to judge badly of them?" We read that even S. Paul not only judged, but also condemned the Corinthians (1 *Cor.* v. 3), and that he gave some others over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme (1 *Tim.* i. 20); and that S. Peter killed Annanias and Sapphira; and that Christ gave the Apostles the power of judging of sins

(xvi. 19; xviii. 18; *S. John* xx. 23). We know that we are commanded to have a right judgment in all things (*S. John* vii. 24). It is asked by S. Hilary, "how, if Christ forbade us to judge at all, He said, 'With what judgment'?" S. Jerome rightly answers: "Christ did not forbid us to judge, but He taught us how to do so". It is certain that He did not forbid those to judge who have not only the public power, but the public obligation to do so; like judges and magistrates, of which class were the Apostles. And it is certain that He did not forbid open public trials, of which S. Paul speaks (1 *Tim.* v. 24). Nor did He prohibit us from judging of doubtful questions, so that we do not extend our decision beyond what the proofs warrant. All these questions have rightly been decided by the Doctors of the Church. Of other matters, which may be judged either well or ill, He forbids us to judge ill, for charity requires this of us (1 *Cor.* xiii. 5). So say S. Basil, S. Augustin, Bede (*et al.*), on former passages, except that S. Augustin seems to narrow the meaning too much. "In this place," he says, "I do not see anything laid on us except to judge charitably those questions with regard to which it is doubtful with what animus they were done." We are forbidden to judge not only the intention of another, but even such acts themselves as are doubtful (*Rom.* xiv. 4-13; 1 *Cor.* iv. 5; *S. James* iv. 11, 12). Christ forbids this most especially, lest, when we ourselves are under the yoke of the same, or perhaps even greater sins, we judge unfeelingly of the lesser sins of others. This follows in verse 3 and *Rom.* ii. 1. As say S. Basil, S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Euthymius: much more if we judge others detractingly, for we do him whom we wrong a twofold wrong: 1. We have not, as charity requires, a good opinion of him ourselves. 2. We blacken that which others have of him (*S. James* iv. 11).

That you may not be judged ("*judicabimini*," Fol.).

Judicabimini, Fol.: ἵνα μὴ κρίθητε. Our translator seems to have read, ἵνα μὴ κριθήσεσθε. The sense is the same, only the Hebrew "and" is used for "that," and the future indicative for the present conjunctive. Some refer the judgment to the person, as if it were written: "If you will that others should not judge you, judge not them," as in verse 12 and xxvi. 52; *Isaiah* xxxiii. 1. These words and those of S. Luke, used indefinitely, seem to confirm this view. Others, more correctly perhaps, refer them to God: S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xiv.), The Author (xvii.), S. Augustin (ii., *Serm. Dom.*), Bede, and Euthymius. Christ possibly meant that the judgment of God rather than of man should be threatened to those who judge uncharitably, for this is much more to be dreaded. The antithesis requires this: Judge not men, that you be not judged by God. Add, as has been said, that this agrees with the conclusion of chap. v. So in that chapter, verse 7, it was said: "Blessed are the merciful"—blessed no doubt by God.

Verse 2. *For with what judgment you judge.*

A Hebraism במשפט אשר תשפטו "With the judgment with which you judge others, you yourself shall be judged". S. Hilary asks how we shall be judged with the same judgment as that with which we judge others, if we are forbidden to judge at all? We are not forbidden to judge at all, but to judge wrongly; if we do this we shall be judged in the same manner ourselves, that is, severely.

That is a more difficult question which S. Augustin asks in many places, especially in ii., *De Serm. Dom.*, *Ep.* xlix., quæst. 4, *Quæst. Evang.*, ii. quæst. 8, S. Chrysostom, Bede, and Euthymius. How we shall be judged by the judgment with which we judge others, or whether, if we judge others hastily and unjustly, God will judge us in the same manner. S. Augustin and Bede reply that not God,

but our own rash and unjust judgment itself will judge us —that is, will be the cause of our being judged. We may rather perhaps answer that all kinds of judgment are not intended, but only curious and severe ones; for with what curiosity and severity we judge others, with the same will God judge us. When I say "the same" I mean not the same in fact, but in degree (for the mercy and goodness of God are infinitely greater than ours), for in whatever degree we are severe to others, will God be so to us.

And with what measure you mete.

S. Luke (vi. 38) seems to say that we shall have meted to us, not the same measure as we have given to others, but a greater. Each statement is true. Both the same and a greater measure will be dealt to us: the same if we regard proportion; a greater if we regard the thing given. How it will be meted in the same proportion has been explained; how in the greater thing will be easily understood. For whether we regard the future glory or punishment which God will adjudge to us, it will be much greater than that of which, in our condemnation of others, we judge them worthy (*Rom.* viii. 18; 2 *Cor.* iv. 17). We may answer the objection of those Gentiles in the same way. They maligned this, saying that there would not be the same measure when one was eternal and the other temporal (S. Augustin, *Ep.* xlviii. 9; *De Civitate*, xxi. 11), although he also gives another reply. These and many sayings which follow were proverbs, as is clear from the text itself, and as many of the commentators have proved.

Verse 6. *Give not that which is holy to dogs.*

To what does this tend? The Author (*Hom.* xvii.) refers to chap. v., verses 44, 45. Christ had there said: "Love your enemies". He now shows the moderation of this feeling, and that we are not to love our enemies so

injudiciously and without discrimination as to give what is holy to dogs, and to cast our pearls before swine. Some think that because in verse 5 Christ had spoken of the correction of others, He now admonishes us not to give that which is holy to the dogs, and our pearls to the swine; that is, where there is no hope of improvement, not to attempt correction. Others say that, as He had taught simplicity—"If thine eye offend thee"—He now teaches prudence; as in x. 16 He says, "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves: Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves". This is the opinion of S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*, ii.). Part of the sermon seems addressed, as has been said, to the Apostles on the mount, because it properly applies to those who were to teach others. But, as has been said before, the Evangelist records the sayings of Christ, not in the order in which they were spoken, but in that in which they occurred to his own mind.

What Christ terms that which is holy (*sanctum*), what pearls, what dogs, and what swine, is not difficult to be understood, though all do not agree about it. Some think that Holy Baptism, the Eucharist, and other Sacraments are called pearls, the mysteries of evangelical doctrine. For the Sacraments of the Church are not to be given, nor the mysteries of our faith published to the unworthy. Hence it became the custom that they who had not been baptised were not properly allowed to see, or hear, the Body and Blood of Christ when they were named, as S. Chrysostom and S. Augustin in many passages signify.

Many distinguish between the dogs and the swine. Some, as S. Jerome says on this passage, called unbelievers the swine, and the Christians who, after they had received the faith, went back to their vomit, the dogs. On the other hand, S. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand by the dogs unbelievers, and by the swine sensual Christians.

For Christ calls unbelievers dogs (xv. 26). S. Augustin seems to hold rightly that the same thing is meant by "Holy things" and "pearls," "dogs" and "swine," as 2 *S. Peter* ii. 22. The same thing is signified by the double metaphorical proverb of dogs and swine. Or if there be a difference, by the holy thing is meant every mystery, by the pearls whatever is most precious and costly among the mysteries. By dogs and swine two classes of men are denoted, whether believers or unbelievers, to whom the holy mysteries are not to be given: the profane, who hold sacred things in contempt; as dogs, see no difference between a holy and a common object, and those who not only despise but are enraged by them, and rather do them harm, like swine. Why the former are described as dogs and the latter as swine shall be explained hereafter.

S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiv.) and S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) ask how Christ forbids us to teach the unworthy divine mysteries, when He elsewhere commands that all be taught without distinction (x. 27; *S. Mark* xvi. 15). They answer that Christ there speaks of the Gospel *per se*, which, as it is necessary to the salvation of all, is to be preached to all without distinction of persons. But He speaks here of profitable hearers, and of the wisdom of communicating the Gospel to them; which, if there were either no hope of goodness or even certain fear of harm, is not to be preached to them, since it is not only not worth while, but even the labour itself may be thrown away.

Thus Christ speaks to the Apostles (*S. John* xvi. 12). And S. Paul to the Corinthians (1 *Cor.* iii. 1, 2) complains that he cannot speak to them as spiritual, but only as carnal; and that he can only give them milk as babes in Christ, and not solid food. To the same effect he writes to the Hebrews (v. 12). And for the same reason SS. Paul and Timothy were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to teach the Word of God in Asia, because the people would not

receive it (*Acts* xvi. 6); and to the Jews at Antioch, because they not only did not receive it, but even trod it under foot, and threatened the lives of the two Apostles (*Acts* xiii. 46). So S. Paul gave Hymenæus and Alexander over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme (1 *Tim.* i. 20). In the same way he teaches that they who resisted the truth, as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, are to be avoided and not taught (2 *Tim.* iii. 3). And he orders S. Timothy to avoid Alexander the coppersmith, who had greatly withstood his words (2 *Tim.* iv. 15). S. John treated Diotrephes on the same principle (3 *John* 9, 10). Lastly, Christ will not have His holy mysteries cast to dogs and swine—animal and sensual men who understand not the things of the spirit (1 *Cor.* ii. 14).

Judas may be objected, to whom, although unworthy and a dog and a swine, Christ, as the greater number of authors think, gave His Body and Blood, the greatest of all mysteries. But (1) the designs of Christ, as we are often unable to discover their causes, are not always to be followed by us; (2) Judas was a sinner, though a secret one, and was not to be pointed out by the sacrament being refused to him alone, lest the death of Christ, that chief of all mysteries, should be hindered. Why is it forbidden to give that which is holy to dogs, and not pearls; and pearls, not that which is holy, to swine? When Christ speaks of that which is holy, He may have had regard to sacrifices, the flesh of which was holy and was not to be given to dogs, nor applied to the use of any but God, the priests, and those who had offered them. Flesh is not commonly given to swine, but to dogs, which cannot discern between sacred and ordinary food. He said besides, "Give not your holy things to dogs". With regard to swine and dogs there is a different modus or ratio of speech, for it is not said, "Cast not your pearls before swine," as being the custom, but because it was the contrary; and nothing

becomes swine, the most foul and filthy of all animals, less than pearls, which are the most costly and beautiful of jewels (*Prov.* xi. 22).

There remains still another question. Why did Christ say of the swine, "Lest they turn upon you and tear you," and did not say it of dogs? for swine are not accustomed to do this, and dogs are. He desires to point out the thankless stolidity of the swine, who often attack those who bring them food, and, unless resisted, tear them. Dogs are more faithful. They ask for their food, not by their teeth, but by movements of their tails. Senseless men, then, are like swine. They tread under foot the true doctrine, and support the false by force.

Verse 7. *Ask and it shall be given you.*

SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, and others think that Christ said this now, because, as He had before taught very different matter, He would now show how His words might be kept. Others think the meaning to be: "If you do what I have said, ask and you shall receive," as 1 *S. John* iii. 22. But S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*) says: "If the listener, conscious of his own ignorance, should say, 'Why dost thou forbid me to give what is holy to dogs, when I have it not to give?' Christ seasonably adds, 'Ask and it shall be given,'" &c. These words should apparently be added to the Lord's Prayer, both because Christ is speaking of prayer, and because it is probable that He said them when He taught the Apostles to pray, and as S. Luke (xi. 9) joins them to it. We have now to consider their meaning.

S. Irenæus (ii. 18, 26, 53) tells us how the early heretics wrested these words in support of what they called their mysteries (which, in truth, were insanities). S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) thinks that the three words, "ask," "seek," "knock," do not mean the same thing, but he afterwards changed his opinion. It is an exaggeration from an

accumulation of words. The chief question is how the words are true, when daily experience teaches us that we ask for many things which we do not receive. On vi. 12, it has been shown that these promises are not to be taken simply and without exception, and by this rule the passage must be explained. For not everyone who asks receives, but he who asks rightly.

1. We do not receive when we ask for that which is evil; that is, that for which we ought not to ask. For we do a wrong to God if we ask evil of Him, as if we thought Him the author of evil.

2. We do not receive when we ask for that which, if not evil in itself, yet tends to evil (*S. James* iv. 3).

3. We do not receive when we ourselves are evil and unworthy (*S. John* ix. 31).

4. We do not receive when we ask with no faith, or with a weak and vacillating one (*S. James* i. 5-7).

5. We do not receive when that for which we ask is not evil, or is even good, but which, as hindering good, cannot be granted: saving God's grace.

6. We do not receive sometimes because God wills us to ask often; as is shown by the two parables of the importunate friend seeking bread, and the unjust judge and the widow (*S. Luke* xi. 8; xviii. 3).

S. Augustin (*Serm.* v. *de Verb. Dom. in S. Matth.*) says: "When God gives slowly He commends, and does not refuse His gifts. What is long wished for is sweeter in possession; what is given quickly is thought little of. Ask, seek, insist, increase in asking and seeking, that you may receive. God reserves what He does not please to give quickly, that we may learn to seek earnestly for greater things.

7. We do not receive, sometimes, that we may gain gifts better than those we ask for. S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom. and Ep.* xxxiv. *to Paulinus*) says: "The Lord is good, who

often gives not what we wish for, that He may bestow on us what we would rather have".

Verse 9. *Or what man is there.*

"Or" (*aut*, ἢ) what man, that is not God, like your Heavenly Father? Christ opposes man to God, who is good; and to "you," who are evil (verse 11).

If his son shall ask.

Christ says that no father would give his son a stone when he asked for bread. For there is nothing, on the one hand, more like, and, on the other, more unlike bread than a stone. Nothing more like in colour and form, nothing more unlike in nature and use (iv. 3). The serpent is opposed to a fish. We may ask why Christ spoke thus. For He seems to have answered more than necessary. It is so, in truth. But He shows not only that God will aid those who ask Him, but that He will give good things—bread, not a stone; a fish, not a serpent. This is the saying of S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiv.), The Author (*Hom.* xxviii.), and Theophylact.

Verse 11. *If you then being evil.*

Not by nature, but by comparison with God (S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius), or by natural proclivity (*Gen.* viii. 21), as S. Jerome explains it; or as seems more probable, not only in comparison with God, which is saying nothing, since even in the angels He finds imperfection, and the stars are not pure in His sight (*Job* iv. 17, 18; xxv. 5): nor only by natural propensity, but by will and in life; because He seems to have desired to correct them by the way.

Know.

That is, are accustomed to, as "the sun knoweth his going down" (*Ps.* ciii. 19).

How much more then will your Father.

Christ compares Father to father, the heavenly to the earthly, God to man, goodness to evil. He argues from the less to the greater. So *Isaiah* xlix. 15.

Verse 12. *All things therefore.*

The same question occurs here which we have often met before. To what do the words tend? S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiv.), Euthymius, and Theophylact think it a compendium and epilogue, as it were, of all the three chapters preceding. Others refer it, not without reason, to verse 1—"Judge not"—as if the following verses had been spoken in a parenthesis. Some connect it with verse 7—"Ask and you shall have"—as if Christ would teach us how to obtain what we ask—if we do to others as we would have them do to us (S. Augustin, ii., *De Serm. Dom.*). Others refer it to vi. 22—"The light of thy body is thy eye"—as if Christ would teach us to practise the same simplicity to others as we would wish others to practise to us, as S. Augustin explains.

It would appear as if Christ had spoken these words after those of verse 42; both because they agree with them well, and because S. Luke (vi. 31) joins the two together. S. Luke, therefore, has kept the order of Christ's words in this passage. S. Matthew has not; and the text in S. Luke is coherent—that of S. Matthew shows a dissonance.

This is the Law and the Prophets.

That is, in this are contained all the precepts of the Law and the Prophets. Christ, by this name, understands the whole Old Testament: the Law, the five books of Moses, and the Prophets, with all the rest of the Canon. This was according to the custom of the Jews, who included all the other books—*Kings*, *Paralipomenon*, and *Psalms*—under the name of the Prophets, as xi. 13; xxii. 40; *S. Luke*

xvi. 16; *Acts* xxiv. 14; xxviii. 23. S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*; viii., *De Trin.*) and Euthymius (*In Comment.*) ask how this manner of action can be said to be the Law and the Prophets when, in xxii. 40, it is said to consist not of this one precept, but of two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) answers that Christ does not speak of the whole Law in this passage, but that it consisted of this first principle. In chap. xxii. He spoke of the whole Law, as if He spoke here only of the love of our neighbour, and reserved for another place the other commandment of the love of God. S. Augustin says to better purpose (viii., *De Trin.*), that even here, although not said in terms, the whole Law is to be understood. For he who loves his neighbour cannot but love Love itself, that is, God; for God is love (1 *John* iv. 16). We should speak with more ease, not of the kind of love of our neighbour which is spoken of here, but of the love itself with which we love him, which is not for his sake, nor for our own, but for God's alone. For the law of the love of our neighbour is to be understood thus: Whoever loves his neighbour for the sake of God, loves God more. The rule of Aristotle subserves this. Hence, S. Paul says that, in the one precept of the love of our neighbour, the whole Law is contained (*Rom.* xiii. 8-10; *Galat.* v. 14; vi. 2; *Tobias* iv. 16). Philosophers, then, have rightly taught that this is the first principle of Nature and of the moral law. The Emperor Severus, who was thought to have some inclination to the Christian faith, used to say that he liked the Christians, because what they would have to be done to themselves, that they did to others.

Verse 13. *Enter ye in at the narrow gate.*

The authors whom we have mentioned in the former verse connect these words variously with the preceding.

They appear to have been spoken after what has been related in chap. v. of the Beatitudes, for that is the narrow gate: or certainly not in the assembly, but when Christ was asked by someone who wondered at the severity of His precepts if there were few who would be saved, as related by S. Luke (xiii. 23, 24). He observes more strictly the order of the sayings of Christ. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius ask how Christ calls His way narrow and strait, when He says that His yoke is easy and His burthen light (xi. 30). They reply that the yoke is hard to the carnal-minded and to those who seek earthly things, but light and easy to the spiritual and such as look on to things future (*Rom.* viii. 18; 2 *Cor.* iv. 17). Thus S. Paul says that the sufferings of the ancient saints by sword, fire, and other instruments of torture, although heavy in themselves, were light to him—because he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the Egyptians" (*Heb.* xi. 26); and still, when he had laboured more than the other Apostles (2 *Cor.* xi. 23), he yet held all most light for the sake of Christ (*Philipp.* iii. 7, 8). Christ calls the gate narrow and the way strait for two reasons: 1. Partly because, by its nature, the way of virtue is more difficult than that of vice. The former is uphill, the latter is the contrary. The former is one, the latter manifold. The former is trodden by few notable footsteps, the latter by many, and those deeply-impressed, and as the Greek poet said:

"The gods have put toil before virtue".

2. Because our own slothfulness makes virtue more difficult. For there is nothing that is not easy to those who make the effort.

Verse 14. *How narrow.*

The Greek is ὅτι, *quoniam*, "since," "for". It may be thought that we should adopt this reading. Some think that

the translator may have read ὡς, "how," instead of ὅτι. He probably found neither word, but τί στένη, as Euthymius and Theophylact read it, though they warn us that τί is put for ὡς, *quam*, as in our version. It is probably a Hebraism מה which means the same as τί, *quid*, and ὡς, *quam*—as *Psalm* viii. 1, 10; xxx. 20; lxxxiii. 1.

It may be asked whether the same thing be meant by the narrow gate and strait way. S. Chrysostom thinks that it is, but it appears more likely that we should understand by "the way," the precepts, and by "the gate," the end of the precepts: that is, the entrance into the kingdom of heaven, for the gate is the end of the way.

Verse 15. *Beware of false prophets.*

It has been thought that these words should be referred to vi. 1, as if Christ called those hypocrites who do their justice before men "false prophets," to teach men to avoid them. S. Augustin (ii., *De Serm. Dom.*) more correctly connects these words with the former verse: "Christ had said that the way which leads to eternal life is strait. When our road is narrow and dark, we take a guide or follow some index to show it to us. Christ warns us not to trust to every guide or index; for many false prophets are to be found who offer themselves as guides, and wear sheep's clothing like travellers."

Of false prophets.

Christ does not mean that all hypocrites are to be considered false prophets, as some think, but only the false teachers; that is, all heretics whom Christ so terms. For it was the duty of prophets among the Jews, not only to foretell future events, but also to teach the people the Law, and to point out to them the way of salvation. The question is of showing the strait way. We can understand that true prophets are included — true, that is, because they

foretell truly, as Balaam is said to have done. False prophets are so called, as not being sent by God, and because, when foretelling true things, they persuade to false ones. Verse 22 treats of these. They come of their own will, and are not sent by God, as we read in *Jeremiah* xxiii. 21.

In the clothing of sheep.

The meaning is obvious. "Clothing here means everything outward—words, works, alms, all acts of charity" (The Author, *Hom.* xix.). It is not certain why Christ uses the words "of sheep"; whether He wishes to say that they come in the clothing of sheep, feigning themselves to be true sheep that they may be the less feared, like the wolf in the fable, or that they have the dress of shepherds. This seems the more probable of the two; for Christ is speaking of the teaching of the people, which is the duty of the shepherd of the Church, and He calls those who do it "shepherds" (*S. John* x. 14; xxi. 17). He says, therefore, that they come in sheep's clothing, because they wear the skins of sheep.

Verse 16. *By their fruits.*

As Christ had uttered a warning against false prophets, it was necessary to give some mark by which they might be known. He could not give any single certain one, as their disguises were many, and God alone is the examiner of the human heart, but He gave a probable one adapted to ordinary intelligence and most commonly true, "By their fruits" (*S. Luke* vi. 43).

S. Luke (vi. 43) seems to imply that these words were spoken in another sense and in another place; for he unites them to the injunction recorded by S. Matthew (v. 5)—"Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye"—as if the meaning were: Thou hypocrite, why wilt thou pretend to be a good tree when thou

bearest evil fruit? for, however thou mayest wish to dissemble thy evil deeds, from thy fruits shalt thou be known; for there is no good tree which brings forth evil fruit, and every tree shall be known by its fruits. In this sense S. Matthew says (xii. 33) that Christ used the same simile of the tree and its fruits, as if He had said: "If you would seem to be good, do not feign goodness, but practise it". The leaves are pretence, the works are the fruit, and the tree is known not by its leaves, but by its fruit. Hence it is clear that Christ used the same comparison more than once; either, therefore, S. Luke is not reciting the same as S. Matthew, or he is not keeping the order and connection of the words of Christ; for in S. Matthew it harmonises so well with the preceding sentence that it cannot be separated from it without one or both being destroyed.

We must see, therefore, what Christ calls the tree, and what the fruits. Tertullian (i., *Cont. Marc.*) thinks faith the tree. This agrees well with the text, which treats of the distinguishing between true and false faith. But S. Augustin (xv., *Euchirid.*, and i. 3, *Cont. Julian.*) and Bede, on this passage, think that the man's will is the tree and the man himself the ground; for as a good and evil tree can spring from the same ground, but good and bad fruit cannot come from the same tree, but good from good and evil from evil: so from the same man may proceed at one time a good will, at another a bad will, but from the same will both good and bad works cannot proceed. S. Augustin (*De grat. Christ.*, i. 18, 19), The Author (*Hom.* xix.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiv.), Theophylact, and De Lyra call the man who has a good will a good tree, and the man who has an evil will an evil tree. This view would agree well *per se* with the context, if the latter were not concerned with the discerning of true faith, but of a good will; but it is concerned with true faith: "Beware of false prophets".

Christ calls the man, then, who has faith, whether good

or bad, "a tree"—a good tree if his faith be good, an evil tree if it be bad. It may be answered that a man who has a good faith frequently brings forth evil fruit. This cannot be denied; but Christ does not speak of what is so occasionally, but of what is so for the most part—not of what is used to happen from human perversity, but from the nature of faith; for faith, by its own nature, if good, does not bring forth evil fruit, nor if evil, good fruit.

Verse 18. *Cannot.*

These words seem to be opposed to daily experience; for we see many from evil become good, and from good become evil. Many explanations of them have, therefore, been offered.

1. Many have taken them to mean that a good tree, while it is good, and an evil tree, while it is evil, cannot bring forth the one good and the other evil fruit (S. Augustin, The Author, S. Chrysostom, Bede).

2. Others have seen that in this manner truth and experience are not satisfied. For, although a good tree, that is, a just man, continuing to be such, cannot bring forth evil fruit, yet an evil tree, remaining evil, can bring forth some good fruit. Nor is the opinion (lately condemned, with justice, by the Council of Trent) to be held, that all the works of sinners, or even of infidels, are sin, although S. Augustin himself (iv. 3, *Cont. Julian.*, and iii. 5, *Cont. Epist. duas Pelag.*) and Prosper (*Sentent.* cvi.) seem to have held it, and some Catholic divines have defended it. They have, therefore, asserted that a good tree, in that it is good, cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree, as it is evil, bring forth good fruit. But we cannot by this means distinguish a good from a bad tree, which is the question at issue.

It is not asserted, therefore, that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit; for this

cannot possibly be, for assuredly an evil tree can bring forth some good, and a good tree some evil fruit; but that of their own nature they cannot; and a good tree does not habitually bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit For, each of its own nature, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"; and "a good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things". And when Christ had previously said, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree evil and its fruit evil" (*S. Matt.* xii. 33-35), He added, "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?" but not as meaning that it could not be. For the Scribes and Pharisees of whom He spoke (xxiii. 2, 3) were certainly evil, because their lives were evil; and yet they uttered good words, because what they said was to be done. This only shows, however, that in this they acted against their nature, and were not accustomed to do so.

It will be objected: "If a good tree can bring forth evil fruit, and an evil tree good fruit, how are we taught to know them by their fruit?" It may be objected, again: "If the Pharisees, when they brought forth evil fruit, were yet the good tree, that is, were not false prophets, but true Doctors of the Law, how could they be known by their fruits? For if the hearers had followed this rule of Christ, and judged of their doctrine by their lives, they would have rejected the former as false." Christ did not will to give a certain text, but only a probable sign; and to teach that false prophets, who proved their doctrine to be false by their pretence of holiness, would not be able to conceal themselves long under the sheep's clothing, but that the wolf which underlay it would, some time or other, appear. For pretence cannot long pass for truth.

It is wonderful how many errors have sprung from this good and evil tree. (1) First of all there came the Mani-

cheans, who said that some men were good by nature and never evil; and (2) that there were others evil by nature, who never could be good. S. Jerome (*in loc.*), and S. Augustin (i. 3, *Cont. Julian. Disput.*; ii., *Cont. Fortunat.*) have refuted them out of Scripture. (3) The Pelagians denied original sin, because marriage, they said, was a good tree, and could not bring forth evil fruit, that is, generate original sin. S. Augustin (ii. 26, *De Nupt. et Concupis.*) has answered this. Again, they said that free-will was inherent in us, like a kind of root, and could, of itself and by itself (*ipsa per se*), produce either a good tree, that is, a good will, or an evil tree, that is, an evil will (S. Augustin, i. 18, *De Grat. Christ.*).

Verse 21. *Not everyone that saith to Me.*

All the Ancients explain these words of the life of beatification. For, although the Church is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, the words "Enter into the kingdom of heaven" never signify the Church, but always the life of everlasting beatification. It is clear that Christ, in this passage, is speaking of the reward which is given, not in the Church, but in the kingdom of heaven. As if He had said, "The way to heaven is not by words but by actions," and, from the following verse, it is clear that the allusion is to the last judgment, when some will be admitted into heaven, and others will be shut out.

But he that doeth the will of My Father.

It seems as if Christ should have said, "He that doeth My will," for the people called Him "Lord," and not the Father, and they ought to do the will of Him whom they confess as their Lord. "Why call ye Me Lord, and do not the things which I say?" S. Chrysostom and Theophylact reply, on the passage, that we may see that the will of the Father and of the Son are the same, as the Son, when He

ought to have named His own will, named His Father's instead.

But if the will of each be the same, why did He speak of His Father's rather than His own? They answer that He did so, as it would be more acceptable to His hearers, and would cause less invidiousness to Himself. Another reason may be suggested. Christ everywhere ascribes to the Father the "person" of a lawgiver, and He comports Himself as His legate—numbering Himself among those who do the will of the Father, as in xxvi. 42; *S. John* iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 38; and He always speaks of "the will of My Father," not of "My will," as in xii. 50.

Verse 22. *In that day.*

In that terrible and most notable day. For the word "that" has here this force. As if Christ spoke of a day not like others, but sure, and peculiar, and to be filled with the fear and the fame of the future judge (xxiv. 36; *S. Mark* xiii. 32; *S. Luke* xxi. 34; 1 *Thess.* v. 4; 2 *Tim.* i. 12, 18; iv. 8; 1 *Cor.* iii. 13; iv. 5).

Many miracles.

Miracles are of many kinds, at least frequently. For what Christ had before said *per partes* and distributively, He *now* concludes *in genere*. As if He then said, "Have we not prophesied and cast out devils, and done many other miracles in Thy name?"

This passage has given rise to the question whether miracles can be wrought, even by the wicked. This, at least, is certain. As there are two kinds of miracles, the true and the false, the false can be wrought even by the wicked. For S. Paul declares (2 *Thess.* ii. 9) that Antichrist will work false miracles; and although it may be doubted whether the magicians of Pharaoh worked true miracles or not, yet, at least, it is certain that they did

work false ones. The question is, therefore, of true miracles: Whether they can be wrought by the wicked?

Here a distinction is to be made. For true miracles can be wrought by the wicked, either while they are wicked or before they began, or after they had ceased to be such. It is not doubtful as regards the two last classes. For Saul, before he became wicked, when he was a "child of one year" (1 *Kings* xiii. 1), prophesied, as we read in 1 *Kings* x. 10-12; and S. Matthew the publican, after he had ceased to be a publican, that is, a public sinner, wrought many miracles like the other Apostles. It is more doubtful as to those who are wicked as long as they remain so.

There is yet another distinction to be observed. For a question may be raised as to the wicked who have faith, or of the same who have none. Of the former, Scripture has taught us that they can work true miracles; for Caiaphas was wicked, but he prophesied because he was high priest that year; Judas wrought miracles while he believed in Christ, for he received power with the other Apostles (*S. Matt.* x. 1); and he gloried with the others, because the devils were subject to him (*S. Luke* x. 17); and yet he was a thief, and bore the purse (*S. John* xii. 6). Saul, after the Lord had departed from him, stood in the midst of a company of prophets and prophesied like the rest (1 *Kings* xix. 20-24). As miracles are done most chiefly by faith, we may doubt of those who have not faith; not whether they do work miracles, for Scripture declares that they do: but whether they work true miracles.

S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxv.), S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Theophylact prove by many examples that, even by men who do not believe, true miracles have been wrought. For Balaam, a false and unbelieving prophet, prophesied truly (*Numb.* xxiv. 17). From this passage we may easily conclude that the false prophets of whom Christ spoke as hereafter to do true miracles, prophesied truly—truly cast

out devils; and Christ did not say that they were liars, but that, though they had done these things, He did not know them. The sense of the passage requires it that Christ signified their miracles to be true. For it would have been no matter of wonder if, to those who had done false miracles, He should have answered that He did not know them. But it would have been strange indeed if He had made this reply to those who had done true miracles. It would not have been a great matter if He had warned us against believing those who did false miracles. But it is wonderful that He puts us on our guard against believing false prophets, even if they do true miracles. We are not to discern between true and false prophets by their miracles alone, but also by their fruits, that is, by their lives.

It will be said: "No conclusion in proof of the truth of the doctrine can be drawn from true miracles. It does not follow that no proof at all can be drawn, but none wholly conclusive. We know that Christ gave the Apostles power to work miracles, for the confirmation of the faith. We know that the whole world was drawn to the faith by the power of miracles. They who deny this, as S. Augustin says, against the Gentiles, work, themselves, a greater miracle by taking away miracles. For it is a more incredible miracle that the whole orb of the world—that is, that so many philosophers and wise men—should have believed the Apostles, who were so few in number and without learning, when teaching things so incredible to human reason, without any miracles, than were the miracles themselves which are declared to have been done by them. It is, therefore, a probable argument for the faith that is drawn from miracles, for they are often done by faith, very seldom indeed without it. When they are done they are done, not to prove the faith of those who do them, but to confirm the truth of the faith of those who have faith. For Balaam did not confirm his own faith by his prophecies,

but rather the faith of the people of God against whom he had been brought to bear testimony; and almost all the miracles which were done by heretics (and they were, indeed, few) appear to be of this kind, and such as we read of in Scripture.

For the argument derived from miracles is necessary, if not from every point of view, yet at least from one or even two. For although it does not follow of necessity that whoever works miracles should have true faith, it does follow that that in which frequent and, as it were, ordinary miracles are wrought, must be the true Church; because, although God sometimes permits miracles to be wrought by particular individual creatures, out of His Church, as He did by Balaam's ass, which was certainly not in the Church, yet to no society of men in general has He given the ordinary power of miracles but to His Church.

The negative argument on the other side has, in fact, more force—that that in which no miracle is wrought cannot be the true Church of God, because we know that He has given to this the power of working miracles. SS. Jerome and Augustin object, on this passage, "that 'no one can say Jesus but by the Holy Ghost' (1 *Cor.* xii. 3). How, then, can they who have not the Spirit of God, not only say Lord, Lord, but even work miracles in the name of Christ?" They answer: "To say Jesus does not there mean to utter the name in words, but in deeds". That is, not only to confess Christ by faith, but to show Him in our lives, which no one, it is plain, can do without the Holy Ghost.

Verse 23. *And then.*

In that day (of which Christ has spoken in the preceding verse), before all men, when the hidden things of darkness will be revealed: "As if He had said, I will bear with you, and dissemble with you, even to that day, and leave you

like chaff mixed with the grain on the threshing floor; but then I will search you, then I will sift you" (S. Jerome, The Author, and Bede).

I will profess.

The Author read ὁμώσω, "I will swear," for ὁμολογήσω, "I will confess," which agrees well with the text. For by "swear" he understands Christ to say, "Amen, amen, I say unto you I know you not" (xxv. 12). S. Jerome and others explain the words, "I will profess," to mean, "I will publicly profess that I know them not". Christ appears to oppose His own true to their false confession, as if He had said: They have confessed Me falsely before men; I will confess them truly before My Father, but that I know them not. As He says on the contrary of those who have truly and sincerely confessed Him: "Everyone that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess Him before My Father who is in heaven" (x. 32).

I never knew you.

Theophylact says: "Not even then when you did miracles". All ancient authors, and Origen first (*On Rom.* viii.), have observed that the word "know," in this and other like passages, does not mean knowledge, but feeling, approbation, as *S. John* x. 14; 2 *Tim.* ii. 19; *S. Matt.* xxv. 12; *S. Luke* xiii. 25. For God knows all men, but He does not approve all men for His own. The true meaning of the passage is manifold. It may mean (1) either "I never knew you, that is, I never held you as my own, I never placed you in the number of the predestinated"; or (2) "I never held you for true prophets, such as you feigned to be". This agrees apparently with the text, of which the subject is the discerning of false prophets.

Verse 24. *Everyone, therefore.*

Having spoken of false prophets generally, Christ now concludes generally of all mankind.

Who heareth these My words.

Some refer these words to the contents of the three chapters preceding. But it seems more safe to refer them to all the sayings of Christ, and to explain "these words" to mean words of this kind, "these words and others like them," or "these, my present words". For those which Christ had spoken before were His own words, and the whole genus is frequently signified by some one individual.

That built.

To build is to believe in Christ (1 *Cor.* iii. 10). Of this building Christ says that the foundation may be twofold—the sand or the rock. He calls faith without works sand (verse 26), and He calls good works the rock (verse 24). Hence are derived arguments against two errors of the followers of Calvin. (1) That faith alone is not sufficient for salvation. (2) That good works, which are adjuncts of faith, not only justify and avail very greatly to, but are also a most firm foundation of, our salvation; nor is it contrary to S. Paul (1 *Cor.* iii. 11). There are many stones in the same foundation, of which Christ is the first and chief, and beside this foundation none other can be laid by any man; but upon Him all other things are built which rest upon this foundation. For both Apostles and Prophets are called a foundation (*Eph.* ii. 20; *Apoc.* xxi. 14). Faith and works, therefore, are two foundations, each resting upon Christ, the first and firmest of all. But faith alone is sand strewn upon a rock, which, however firm and strong the rock itself, is easily scattered, and then it brings down whatever is built upon it. Works are a rock upon a rock, which no rain, no wind, no rushing torrent can destroy.

Verse 25. *The rain fell.*

Some distinguish the three words, "rain," "wind," and "flood," as meaning three different things. It is more pro-

bable that Christ, by these three words, by which buildings are most frequently ruined, meant to describe the same day of judgment as a terrible tempest, as in *Ps.* xlix. 3. Christ, therefore, teaches us that those who have good works will stand firmly in the judgment, and that all others, whatever their faith, will perish utterly. "For the wicked shall not rise in judgment" (*Ps.* i. 5).

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST CLEANSES THE LEPER, HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT, PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS: HE STILLS THE STORM AT SEA, DRIVES THE DEVILS OUT OF THE MAN POSSESSED, AND SUFFERS THEM TO GO INTO THE SWINE.

Verse 1. *And when He was come down.*

S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxvi.), The Author (*Hom.* xxi.), take this to mean that all that is contained in the three previous chapters was spoken by Christ on the Mount. That this was not so has been proved in verse 1. S. Matthew says, "When He was come down from the Mount," not because He had spoken all His sermon on the Mount, but because when he said (verse 1) that Christ had gone up into the Mount to escape the multitude and there held a conversation with the Apostles; and when he had taken occasion from this to relate other conversations, wishing now to relate what Christ did for the crowd that afterwards followed Him, he must of necessity say that He came down from the mountain; for the people could not follow Him unless on the plain.

It may be asked why S. Matthew, when he related the words of Christ to the same multitude (vi., vii.), did not say that He came down from the mountain and the multitudes followed Him. It was not necessary that he should say that Christ came down, unless to give the reason of the multitude having followed Him; nor to say that they did so after His sermon, because it was of no moment what

listeners or witnesses of His doctrine He had while He was speaking; but it was of moment to know how many witnesses there were of His miracles, that no one might endeavour to suppress or undervalue them. Besides, S. Matthew, after he had set forth Christ's doctrine, desired, as S. Jerome says, to relate His acts, and he said, "Great multitudes followed Him". In this S. Matthew follows another order than that of the other Evangelists; for they describe the miracles before the doctrine, as if the former should give assurance of the latter.

Verse 2. *And behold a leper.*

S. Mark (i. 40) and S. Luke (v. 12) relate some other miracles first. It is uncertain, therefore, whether this happened after those, or those after this, only that S. Matthew saying, "And behold a leper," seems to imply that this took place immediately on Christ's descent from the mountain; for this is the force of the word "behold," as has been shown on chap. ii. 1. Leontius well observes that the sick were not brought to Him, lest they should interrupt His teaching.

And adored Him.

προσέκυνε, "bent the knee," "threw Himself at the feet of Christ" (*S. Mark* i. 30; *S. Luke* v. 12). The Hebrew is נפל לפניו which many explain to mean respect shown to Christ as to some prophet or holy person. It would, however, appear to have been an act of worship; and all the Evangelists appear to have described it so carefully to show the faith of the leper, which would, however, have been very slight indeed, if he had thought Christ nothing more than a prophet or holy person. He believed Him, however, to be God; for he could not have said to any but God "If Thou wilt". He did not say, "If Thou wilt pray to the Father," but "If Thou wilt," as showing that His power was equal to the Father's. So say S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxvi.), Theophylact, and Euthymius. Great, indeed, is

the faith and singular the manner of prayer of one who asks nothing but shows his need and offers his faith.

Verse 3. *And Jesus stretching forth His hand.*

What need was there that Christ should stretch out His hand, and, especially, should touch a leper, whose contact under the Old Law was reckoned unclean? From this, and similar passages, some ancient authors, and among them S. Cyril of Alexandria, think (1) that Christ pleased to heal some sick by the touch of His Person, to show that even His flesh itself, by the union with the Godhead, had a life-bearing and a life-giving power; (2) S. Ambrose (v., *On S. Luke*) gives another reason, that Christ did it to prove the truth of His human nature which He had taken; (3) others say that He was not subject to the Old Law, which forbade the Israelites to touch a leper (*Levit.* xiii. 46), but that as the giver of the Law, He was above the Law: so S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxvi. *on S. Matt.*, and xvii. *on various passages of S. Matt.*), The Author (*Hom.* xxi.), S. Ambrose, Euthymius, Theophylact; (4) others, again, hold that Christ did it to show that it was He Himself and not another who healed the leper, because it was He Himself and not another who touched (S. Chrysostom cited by S. Thomas); (5) it may have been done by Christ to show that the Law, which forbade the touch of a leper, lest he who touched him should be defiled, had no place in Him, who could not be defiled, and who touched, not to be contaminated, but to heal (Tertullian, iv., *Cont. Marc.).*

I will, be thou clean.

Christ answered by the same words as were used by the leper, to confirm his faith by the result (S. Ambrose, v., *On S. Luke;* S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* vii. *on various passages of S. Matthew*).

Made clean.

Mundare. This is not the infinitive mood, but the

imperative. Ancient authors have rightly concluded of the Godhead of Christ from this passage. He healed the leper not as by the power of another, but by His own will and command (S. Justin, *Exposit. Fid.;* Tertullian, iv. *Cont. Marc.;* S. Athanasius, *De Ess. Comm. P.F.S.S.;* S. Ambrose, v., *On S. Luke;* S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxvi.). Some have proved from this passage both the Divinity and the Humanity, as Tertullian, S. Cyril, S. Ambrose, whose words are: "He said 'I will' because of Photinus. He commanded because of Arius. He touched because of Manichæus."

Verse 4. *Thou tell no man.*

It is a fit question why Christ forbade the leper to speak of so great a benefit, and why He commanded him who had received to return no thanks. S. Hilary answers (*Can.* vii.) that this kind of healing will not be offered, but must be sought; that is, the miracle should not seem to be boasted of, as if by the command of Christ, lest others also who were sick should come and seek for a similar cure, and lose the merit of their faith if they came not of their own will, but as urged by the miracle. S. Ambrose concurs. 2. S. Jerome thinks it was unnecessary to boast in words of that cure which the leper bore on his whole person. 3. Others thought it a caution to the leper not to appear to seek his own glory (S. Ambrose, v., *On S. Luke;* S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxvi.; Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact). The opinion of The Author seems excellent; not that the leper was forbidden to speak at all, but only not until he had shown himself to the priest, lest, if they should hear of what had been done by common report, they might falsely declare that the man was not cleansed at all, his cleansing having to be declared by them as the Law commanded (*Levit.* xiv. 46).

Christ, moreover, said to him immediately: "Show thyself to the priest". Why he said this has been much dis-

cussed. Many say that it was to show that He kept the Law (Tertullian, iv., *Cont. Marc.;* S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxvi.; S. Jerome, Euthymius). Others say, if he did not show himself to the priest, he would be compelled to remain without the city, and have no benefit of his cure; because it was not lawful for one who had been healed of this disease to return into the city before the high priest had decided on his cure (Theophylact). S. Jerome gives two other reasons: one to show the man's humility; another, which Bede approves, and which seems the best of all, that the priests would be without excuse if they refused to believe on one whose miracles they had proved. This is the meaning of the words that follow: "For a testimony unto them". They refer not only to the offering of the gift, as shall shortly be shown, but also to the showing of the leper himself.

For a testimony unto them.

Some refer this direction to the word "commanded" just before. Thus the meaning may be: "Offer the gift which Moses commanded, that it may be for a testimony to them that thy cure was not of the priests, nor of man at all in any way, but of God" (S. Hilary). Others refer it to the word "offer," as The Author (*Hom.* xxi.) and Theophylact, as if Christ had said: "Offer to the priest thy gift, lest, if thou offer it not, he speak ill of thy cure, and that the acceptance of it may be a perpetual testimony against them of thy true cure; for they will not be able to say that thou wert not truly healed, for whose cure, both known and approved, they have received thy gift". Others, Tertullian, S. Chrysostom, and S. Ambrose among them, refer it to both words—"show" and "offer". Their idea seems very admirable, that Christ not only gives the reason of His having commanded the leper to offer his gift, but also of His having sent him to the priest, and of His having forbidden him to speak to anyone before he had

seen the priest. The meaning is, then: "Tell no man; that those very men who are My chief enemies may be the first witnesses of My miracles, and their unbelief be made plain by their own testimony". The nature of the gifts to be offered has been described on *Levit.* xiv. 4.

Verse 5. *There came to Him a centurion.*

It is clear even from his title that he was a Gentile; nor is it credible, as SS. Chrysostom and Augustin have pointed out, that when the Jews were under the Roman yoke centurions should have been made of their nation.

It has been doubted whether this were the same centurion as he of whom S. Luke (chap. vii.) writes. The cause of the doubt is the fact that there appears to be a great difference between the narratives of the two Evangelists. S. Matthew says that the centurion came to Christ; S. Luke that he sent to Him, first the elders of the Jews and then his own friends, excusing himself for not having come in person, for he thought himself unworthy to do so. S. Matthew says that the centurion asked Christ not to come into his house, for he did not think himself worthy. S. Luke says that he asked Him to come. From these reasons, some have been led to think the two histories accounts of different events, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxvii.) and Euthymius say. But all the Ancients think otherwise; and, indeed, who can believe that two miracles so like each other could have happened? Each took place in Capernaum; each at the same time; each to the servant of a centurion; each to a paralytic servant; and each centurion said, "I am not worthy," &c. Those who would make them two events act without consideration, dwelling on the points of difference and not on those of resemblance.

As to the words of S. Matthew, that the centurion himself came, and of S. Luke, that he sent the elders of the Jews, some have replied that he did both. He first sent

the Jewish elders, and, when he heard that Christ was coming, his friends, as S. Luke relates; and, at last, when the disease grew more severe, he came himself, as S. Matthew says. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxvii.), Euthymius, and Theophylact. Others think that he came *per alios*, not *per se*, for he is said to come, not only who comes *per se*, but who comes *per alios*, as a suitor is said to appear before a judge, who appears not in his own person, but by his counsel (S. Augustin, *in loc.*, and *De Consens.*, ii. 20, and *Cont. Faust.* xxxiii. 7, 8; Bede; Leontius, *in loc.*). The words of S. Matthew (verses 8, 9) do not affect the question. For as one who comes *per alium* is still said to come, so he who speaks by another is said to speak. The argument is of more force that it does not appear probable that the Jewish elders, who, in S. Luke, ask Christ to come, here ask Him not to come. But the answer is easy: the Jewish elders spoke the words in S. Luke of their own minds. For it is plain, from his account (verses 6, 7), that the centurion did not tell them to ask Christ to come to him, and, therefore, having less faith than the centurion, but more vanity, they did not deliver their message faithfully; but, partly from not believing that Christ could cure the paralytic by a word when absent, and partly wishing, as S. Chrysostom says, to show that they had influence enough to bring Christ, they asked Him, contrarily to their commission, to come. Thus they also added of their own minds, "He is worthy," &c. (verse 4). The centurion had not charged them to say this, but the contrary. One Evangelist, therefore, has related what the centurion directed, the other what the Jews said. It would appear, therefore, that the words in S. Luke (verses 8, 9) were not spoken by the Jews, for they had not faith enough to use expressions so full of belief, especially when, as appears from S. Luke, they had asked Christ to come; but they were spoken by the friends of the centurion, whom, as

S. Luke tells us, he sent to Christ when he heard that He was coming, and who were probably Gentiles, because the Evangelist does not call them Jews, as the others, but "his friends". These, then, as his more intimate friends, seeing that the others had not performed his commission faithfully, he instructed better, to say that he was a man under authority, who said to this soldier, "Go," and he went, and to that one, "Come," and he came, and to another, "Do this," and he did it. As they were more trustworthy, they delivered this message in the words in which they had received it. Some have thought that this centurion was the ruler mentioned by S. John (iv. 46), and that this miracle is the same as the one there described. Leontius, on this passage and on *S. John;* S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius, also on *S. John*, refer to this opinion, and refute it, as I have done.

Verse 6. *My servant.*

Puer as *S. Matthew* reads; *servus* as *S. Luke* (vii. 2).

Verse 8. *I am not worthy.*

ἱκανος, "sufficient," that is, worthy, as in chap. iii. 11; 1 *Cor.* xv. 9; *Coloss.* i. 12.

That Thou shouldest enter under my roof.

They seem to be in error who suppose the centurion to have said this because he was a Gentile, and it was not lawful for Jews to enter the houses of Gentiles. For he could have said this not less properly if he had been a Jew; and he not only said that he was unworthy that Christ should enter his house, but even that he himself should come to Him (*S. Luke* vii. 7). "Not, therefore, because he was a Gentile, but because he knew himself to be a sinner; not from superstition, but from faith, he said that he was unworthy that Christ should enter his house, as S. Peter

said,. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'" (*S. Luke* v. 8 ; Bede).

But only say the word.

A Hebraism : *dic*, "say," that is, command, by a word—*verbo*, "by one only word". The centurion not only opposes a word to a deed, but to a long discourse, as when it is said, "By the Word of the Lord," that is, by one only and most brief word (*Ps.* xxxii. 6). It is possible that the centurion had heard how Christ had healed the leper not long before, by a single word—*Mundare*, "Be thou clean"—and had thence conceived so great faith that he did not doubt the power of Christ to do the same to his own servant. Leontius says that some held that the centurion did not bring his servant to Christ because he was at the point of death, and he feared that the agitation of the journey might be fatal. Leontius rejects the idea as unworthy of the centurion's faith. For he who believed that by one word Christ could heal a dying man, must surely have thought that He could have prevented him from dying.

Verse 9. *For I also am a man.*

The centurion argues not from equal terms, but from the greater to the less. If I, who am under the power of another, the chiliarch and the emperor, yet, having soldiers under me, say to this one "Go," and he goes, and to another "Come," and he comes, how much more canst Thou, who art under no one, by Thine own power alone, heal my servant? that is, Thou art able to do *per alios* what Thou art able to do *per te*. Thus have all Catholics authors explained it (S. Augustin, *Serm. de Verb. Dom.* ; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxvii. ; Bede ; Strabus, *In Comment.*).

Leontius explains the words "under authority" best of all—ὑπὸ ἐξούσιαν, *sub rege*, "under the king". If we had no other proof of what I say, than that it makes the meaning

fuller and more worthy of the so great faith of the centurion, this one argument alone should be sufficient. For who does not see that it was not in accordance with faith so great as that of the centurion to make himself equal in any way to Christ; even if we could imagine him to have done this with truth, he would not have done it in fact. For it would be the act of a very bad petitioner to make himself equal to him of whom he asked a favour; although he thought himself even the superior, he would speak as the contrary. The Greek means: "Even I, who am not God, as Thou art, but a man like those whom I command, yet, because I have soldiers under me, I say to this one," &c. The centurion's assertion that he had soldiers under him was not to show that he was placed in authority, but to give his reason for saying to this one "Go," and to that one "Come," &c.

Verse 10. *Marvelled.*

No one is ignorant that wonder proceeds from knowledge following previous ignorance. We wonder at what we see, or hear, or come to know in any other way, when we were not only in ignorance before, but had not even thought of the subject in question. That Christ, therefore, wondered at this, when He was ignorant of nothing, and much less of that faith of the centurion at which He wondered, when, as S. Augustin says, He had Himself created it, we may justly wonder. Some say that He wondered as man, but even as man He was not ignorant of that faith; nor is it more probable that, as others think, He wondered, not from new knowledge, but from new experience. The Doctors of the Church make a kind of knowledge in Christ, which they call knowledge experimental (*scientia experimentalis*), and which they say that Christ was able to acquire from new events, according to S. Paul (*Heb.* v. 8). But experience cannot cause wonder in those whose minds antici-

pated what they perceive, and it is certain that Christ was such as these.

Much more probable is the opinion of S. Augustin, that Christ did not really wonder, but that we might wonder, as if He had said with wonder: "I have not found so great faith," &c.; he says (i. 7, *Cont. Advers. Leg. et Prophet.*): "Whoever wonders, as men ordinarily use the word, shows that that at which he wonders is unexpected and unforeseen by him. But Jesus foreknew all things, and what He commended to the wonder of men He praised by wondering at it." And again (i. 8, *On Genes. cont. Manich.*): "Who made that faith in them but He who wondered at it? Even if another had made it, why should He wonder who foreknew it? What the Lord wondered at He signified was matter of wonder to us to whom it is natural to be so affected. All such emotions in Him are not signs of a mind disturbed, but of a master who is teaching us."

Christ then is said to have wondered, as God is said to be angry. Not that He is really angry, but that He punishes the sins of those who are angry, Christ is said to have wondered in this manner. Not that He wondered, but that He spoke like a man who does so: "O woman, great is thy faith" (xv. 28).

I have not found so great faith in Israel.

The Greek is *οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ*, "No, not in Israel". Some have concluded, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii., *in loc.*, and *On S. Luke* vii. 5, "He hath built us a synagogue"), that the centurion was an Israelite, and not a Gentile. From each of these passages they should have drawn a contrary conclusion. For when Christ says here that He has not found so great faith, even in Israel, where there ought to be more faith, because he was a son of Abraham, the father of all the faithful, He shows clearly

that the centurion was a Gentile. In *S. Luke* the Jewish elders praise him because, though he was not a Jew, he was so friendly to their nation that he built them a synagogue. We may rightly inquire how Christ said that He had not found so great faith, &c., when we must believe that in the Apostles and Prophets, and certainly in the Blessed Virgin, there was greater. Some, as S. Jerome and Bede, exclude the Patriarchs and Prophets, because Christ does not say, "There is not," but "I have not found"—that is, "In Israel, from whom I was made man". But what shall we say of the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin? S. Jerome thinks that the faith of the one centurion was not compared with that of single Jews, but that the faith of the Church of the Gentiles (which was signified by the centurion) was compared to that of the whole Church of the Jews, and was preferred to it. But this meaning is by anagoge: it is not the literal one, for Christ wondered, also, at the faith of the centurion Himself. The Author (*Hom.* xxii.) gives two not inapplicable explanations: 1. That the centurion had greater faith even than the Apostles. Nor is this so extraordinary, when Christ praises the faith of the centurion so highly, and so frequently blames the Apostles for their want of it, as in verse 26; xiv. 31; xvi. 8; xvii. 20; and *S. Mark* xvi. 14. 2. That the faith of the centurion was greater than that of the Apostles, not simply, but in proportion to the person. For the Apostles were Jews, and the centurion was a Gentile. A little faith in the latter was therefore greater than the very greatest in the former.

The whole passage is apparently capable of two explanations: 1. Christ does not compare the faith of the centurion with that of each of the Apostles, but with that of the people, for we are accustomed at times to speak generally, excluding those of whom there is no question. We sometimes say before a man of learning: "Such an one, this or

that, is the most learned man we ever knew," he with whom we are conversing being excepted, with whom it would be invidious and impolite to compare another. A king says that this person or that is the most powerful of all his subjects, leaving himself unmentioned, whom he knows to be much more powerful than any. Christ said: "There hath not risen among men that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist" (xi. 11); not as including Himself, who was born of woman, and was far greater. So in this place, when He says that He has not found so great faith, He does not include His own family, the Blessed Virgin, and the Apostles.

2. The other explanation is that Christ spoke, not of faith itself, but of the external signs of faith. He had said: I have not found any who has so replied to me—who has made such a profession of faith. The former seems the better of the two.

Verse 11. *From the East and from the West.*

From the whole world beyond Judæa, putting the two most remote points for the whole. S. Augustin (*Serm.* vi. *de verb. Dom. sec. Matt.*) says: "They will come when called". Christ speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, which was foretold by Isaiah (xliii.; xliv. 5-7), and of which the entire *Epistle to the Romans*, especially chapter ix., treats at large.

And shall sit down.

Shall sit down at table—a figure taken from banquets. The kingdom of heaven is often compared to a feast, because "We shall be satisfied when the glory of it shall appear" (*Psalm* xvi. 15; *S. Luke* xiv. 15; xxii. 29, 30; *Apoc.* xix. 9). This is shown by the parable of the wedding, and the guests invited to it (*S. Matt.* xxii. 2; *S. Luke* xiv. 16). It was not the custom of the Gentiles, nor were they allowed, to sit with the Jews, but Christ teaches us

that in the kindom of heaven they shall sit down with the Patriarchs of the Jews—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and be preferred to the Jews themselves.

With Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

Many suggestions have been offered as to the reason of these three Patriarchs being especially mentioned:

1. God is called their God (*Exod.* iii. 6, 15, 16; S. Jerome).

2. They were promised the land of Canaan, which signified the kingdom of heaven (*Gen.* xii. 7; xiii. 15; Theophylact).

3. Their faith shone most brightly, by following which the Gentiles were grafted into the good olive.

These three Patriarchs would appear to be named as the founders of the kingdom of the Jews, who would sit, as it were, at the head of the table, to show that the Gentiles would sit with them—that is, most closely to them—and be preferred before the Jews: as the faith of the centurion, which was the cause of this declaration, came nearer to that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, than the faith of the Jews: at that assembly, as it were, where Abraham, in foretaste of the happiness of heaven, enjoyed the expectation of Christ, and which is called Abraham's bosom (*S. Luke* xvi. 22).

Verse 12. *But the children of the kingdom.*

Some take this (1) to mean the sons of God, and, therefore, the heirs of His kingdom. But why not then call them at once sons of the King?

(2) Others think them to be those in whom God had reigned before, as *Psalm* lxxv. 1: "In Judæa is God known" (S. Jerome and Bede).

(3) Others, again, whose opinion seems better, think them those to whom the kingdom of heaven had been promised, and who were in some sense in possession of it.

And it is said that they will be cast out, as if they had been in the kingdom before, like the guest without the wedding garment (xxii. 12); so thinks Theophylact.

They are called the sons of the kingdom by a Hebraism, בניתמותה because they were born to it and intended for it, as he is termed "the son of death" who is born to die, or the son of those who, as our version renders it, "have been put to death"—*mortificatorum* (*Ps.* lxxviii. 11). What some others say must be considered: namely—

(4) That they were called the children of the kingdom, because they were born in the kingdom of Judæa, which was a kind of shadow or commencement of the kingdom of heaven, that the Jews may be opposed to the Gentiles, as natives to foreigners.

(5) That they were called the sons of the kingdom, not as being such, nor because they had been such but had been cast out, but because they ought to have been such, and were not such, by their own fault, as men are called the sons of wisdom, not because they were, but because they, above all others, ought to have been, wise; for "wisdom is justified by all her children" (*S. Luke* vii. 35).

Into the exterior darkness.

It is not doubtful that hell is here meant, although Origen (*On S. Matt.* xxiii.) thinks it purgatory, which is external to hell. It is uncertain why the place was called darkness, and why exterior darkness, as there is fire there and the darkness itself is most especially internal and concealed.

It is certain that Christ always spoke of hell as a prison of which, although dark, the darkness is inward and not external, but is so much greater as it is more internal. Many have explained the reason of its being called "darkness"; very few have offered any suggestion as to why it is termed exterior. S. Jerome (*Comment.*), S. Augus-

tin (*Ep. to Honor.* cxx. 22), S. Ambrose (vii., *On S. Luke*), say that it is from the condemned being sent into darkness, because they go away from God, who is the true light. This, however, even if true, appears to be allegorical, as is the explanation mentioned by S. Augustin in his *Commentary on Ps.* vi. : "The external darkness is so called as being that blindness which is extreme and cannot possibly be cured, and into which all the condemned are dismissed, because in hell they can bring forth no repentance".

Others hold that it derives this appellation from the place of hell being void of light (*S. Jude*, verse 6) ; for although there is true fire in hell, yet, as SS. Basil and John Damascene say, it has heat, but not light, afflicting the wicked not only with fire, but also with darkness. All the darkness of hell is not called outer, but that into which (as it is said) the Jews are to be cast. According to Theophylact, there are many degrees of punishment there, and the heaviest of all is called the exterior darkness.

This appears to agree with the context, as it makes the antithesis between the Jews and the Gentiles more complete ; for as Christ had said that the Gentiles should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that is, in the first place in heaven—so He now says that the Jews shall be in the last place in hell. But this may be understood otherwise ; for when the subject is the kingdom of heaven, from which all who are shut out are said to be cast into the exterior darkness, reason demands that we enquire why the place into which they are sent is called darkness and exterior darkness. But in this instance, as in many others, the kingdom of heaven is introduced under the likeness of a feast, not of a dinner, but of a supper, because it was the ancient custom to hold festivity rather at supper than at dinner, because the cares of the day were then laid aside and the feast could be extended to a greater length than in

the daytime. Hence S. Paul rightly says: "They that are drunk are drunk in the night" (1 *Thess.* v. 7). We see, therefore, that the kingdom is always called a supper, never a dinner (xxii. 2; *S. Luke* xiv. 16; *Apoc.* xix. 9). The guest-suppers, because they were always held at night, were set off by a great light of torches, which were used not only as necessaries, but also for pride and display. The guests were, therefore, in a strong light; the rest, who were outside, were involved in thick darkness.

Thus they who are cast out of the kingdom of heaven are said to be cast into exterior darkness, because whatever was outside that kingdom was said to be, in comparison, "darkness". They who are in it "shall not need the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall enlighten them" (*Apoc.* xxii. 5).

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Some distinguish these two signs of suffering as two different kinds of punishment—the one of fire, the other of cold, as in *Job* xxiv. 19; Bede (*in loc.*); S. Jerome, or whoever was the author of the commentary on that chapter of *Job*. But Christ, in this passage and others, did not speak of weeping and gnashing of teeth to show two kinds of punishment, the weeping being that of heat, and the gnashing of teeth that of cold; He meant to describe one and the same thing, that is, the greatest degree of torture; for they who suffer extreme agony do both—they weep and they gnash their teeth.

Whether the weeping and gnashing of teeth are literal and actual, or are to be taken as a metaphor, is another question. It must be left open, although it would appear more right to think them literal, both because S. Jerome does so, and from hence proves the doctrine of the Resurrection, and because to explain that by metaphor or figure which can be taken literally is the mark of incredulity, or of one seeking an excuse for his faith.

Verse 13. *Go.*

A Hebrew expression for granting a request, as in *Judges* xi. 38; 1 *Kings* xvii. 37; 2 *Kings* xiv. 8; *S. Mark* v. 34; *S. Luke* vii. 50; viii. 48; *S. John* iv. 50. The Ancients learnt, from this and other similar passages (as ix. 2; *S. Mark* ii. 5; *S. Luke* v. 20), that the faith of one man can profit another. The servant of the centurion either had not faith, or if he had it, for it is not stated, he was healed, not for his own, but for the centurion's faith. This is the opinion of S. Cyril (*Jerus. Cat. Lect.*, v.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii.), S. Ambrose (v., *On S. Luke*).

Verse 14. *When Jesus had come.*

We learn from S. Mark (i. 29) and S. Luke (iv. 38) that this happened as soon as Jesus had given that sermon in the synagogue at Capernaum at which the people wondered (vii. 28), and after He had cast out the unclean spirit (*S. Mark* i. 24; *S. Luke* iv. 34), of which S. Matthew has made no mention. S. Mark (i. 29) has described the whole event with greater fulness than any other of the Evangelists, as S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii.) and S. Augustin (ii., *De Consens.*) have observed. For he relates that only four of the Apostles—SS. Peter, Andrew, James, and John—were with Christ when he entered Peter's house, and that it was they who mentioned to Him the sickness of Peter's wife's mother, and that, when asked, He healed her.

Into Peter's house.

A twofold question has here arisen out of a single word: 1. How S. Peter had a house when he left all things (xix. 27). Heretical teachers have said that the Apostles had not absolutely given up everything, but only the care and management of their affairs, which their following Christ and serving the Gospel did not allow them to superintend, and that they were accustomed to return to their homes

when the preaching of the Gospel allowed. Some Catholics, from incautious perusal of their writings, have fallen into the same error.

Peter had not a house, and he did not speak untruly when he said (xix. 27): "We have left all things and have followed Thee". Nor can it be admitted that they had left the superintendence only, for it is beyond question that S. Peter said that he and the other Apostles had given up all in the same sense as that in which Christ said to the young man: "Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me" (xix. 21). It was called Peter's house, not because it was such, then, but because it had been such. We may believe that he had left it, as they were poor, to his wife and his mother-in-law, unless, perhaps, it was theirs, and was called Peter's because he had lived in it before he was made an Apostle. As it is called the house of Simon and Andrew (*S. Mark* i. 29), it was probably not that of either, but of their father, as the houses of parents are called their children's houses as well.

2. The second question is, how Peter lived in Capernaum when he was a native of Bethsaida (*S. John* i. 44). For this was done in Capernaum, as is clear from *S. Mark* i. 21 and *S. Luke* iv. 31. The above heretics say that he had two houses, one at Bethsaida, where he was born, the other at Capernaum, where he lived on account of the fishing. For Capernaum was on the margin of the lake of Genneseret, a notable sea for fish. Or, as Christ used to live at Capernaum, it may have been that Peter had moved thither. Learned and Catholic Doctors of the Church have answered the question very differently, and much better: that this house of Peter was not at Capernaum, but Bethsaida, which was very near Capernaum, so that when Christ went out of the synagogue at Capernaum, He could easily go to dine or sup at Bethsaida.

Verse 15. *And He touched.*

To take her by the hand and raise her up, as *S. Mark* i. 31.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled.*

Vid. ii. 15.

He took our infirmities.

ἀνέλαβε, "He took," for ἤνεγκε, "He bore," "He carried," *tulit, portavit,* as in *Isaiah* liii. 4. So S. Jerome renders it, *ad verbum.* "He carried," *portavit,* חלינו הוא נשא "our infirmities". The LXX. gives the meaning, but not the words. "He carries," φέρει, "our infirmities," *portat.* They use λαμβάνειν, "to take according to their custom," for φέρειν, *portare,* "to carry," as in *Levit.* xvii. 16; xxii. 9, and elsewhere. What the Prophet says of sins, the Evangelist applies to diseases of the body: either (1) because Christ did not cure diseases of the body, except on account of the sins of the soul; or (2) because, as S. Chrysostom says (*Hom.* xxviii.), diseases of the body are the punishment of sin, and very frequently arise from diseases of the soul; or (3) because S. Matthew is accustomed to apply the prophecies not in the same, but in a similar sense, as in ii. 15, 18.

Verse 18. *And seeing great multitudes.*

S. Matthew gives tacitly the reason of Christ having crossed the lake. It was to escape the multitude, as chap. v. 1; *S. Mark* i. 35. S. Luke (iv. 42) says: *Die facta,* "And when it was day". Each Evangelist shows that Christ retired privately to avoid the throng of the multitude. S. Augustin (*De Cons.,* ii.) thinks that this did not take place the day after Christ held that assembly and healed Peter's wife's mother, but SS. Mark and Luke say that He then went into the desert. He went into the desert after He had crossed the lake, for the mountains and desert were beyond the lake.

Verse 20. *And Jesus said to him.*

It may seem surprising that Jesus rejected so roughly the scribe who offered himself as His disciple. But from the circumstance of the person and Christ's answer, it is not difficult to conjecture that Christ knew him to have come, not so much from the desire of perfection, as from the hope of gain or renown; and when the prospect of poverty was held out to him he was terrified: as the shame of the Cross deterred the sons of Zebedee when they wished to follow Christ for honour (xx. 22), and the young man who seemed good enough to himself, until the perfection of poverty was set before him (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxviii.; S. Hilary; S. Jerome, *In Comment.;* S. Augustin, *De verb. Dom. sec. Matt. Serm.* vii.; Theophylact; and Euthymius, *in loc.*).

The Son of man.

Some Ethnics have endeavoured to prove from these words that Christ was the son of a human father, because the Greek is not τῆς ἀνθρωπου, which would mean the son of a human female, but τοῦ, which implies the son of a male (S. Justin, *Quæst. 66 ad Orthod.*). S. Justin does not so much answer these questions as show from other places of Scripture that Christ was not the son of a human father. The answer is easy. "The son of man" is a mere Hebraism for a man. For Scripture calls all generally the sons of men, including even Adam, the first man, who was the son of no human parent, male or female: but because he was a man he is called the son of man; unless it be said that Christ is called in Scripture the Son of man in the same sense as that in which He is called the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. It is a deeper and more difficult question why Christ alone in the New Testament, and Ezekiel alone in the Old Testament are so called. For I do not remember any but these two to whom this appellation is given; at least, not so frequently and so properly,

although commonly, and in general, all men are called "the sons of man"; for all explain the words of *Daniel* vii. 13 of Christ, and there is no question that they ought to be so explained. Why Ezekiel was so called has been explained in the comment on chap. ii. 1. Why Christ was so called must be explained here.

1. Some say that He was so called to show that it was He whom the Prophets foretold as about to take human nature, and whom they also call the Son of man (*Dan.* vii. 13). This is the opinion of S. Epiphanius, against the Noetians (*Hær.* lvii.), and of Theodoret in his *Commentary on Daniel* vii. 12.

2. S. Gregory Naz. (*Orat.* iv. *de Theolog.*) thinks that Christ was called the Son of Adam to show that He had no human father, but derived His human nature from Adam, through a Virgin.

3. S. Augustin (*De Cons.*, ii. 1) thinks that Christ took the name to show the good of His Incarnation to us: "Commending to us what He mercifully designed to become for us".

4. S. Augustin suggests still another reason: That, being also the Son of God, He desired by this appellation to distinguish His divine from His human nature (*Ep.* clxxiv.; *Tract.* xxv. *on S. John*).

5. Others, as Tertullian (*De Carn. Chsti.*), simply say that Christ wished to show Himself to be true man. The right explanation why He so called Himself is apparently to be sought for from two circumstances: (1) Because He Himself and Ezekiel alone are so called, as S. Irenæus observes (iii. 18); and (2) that He alone so calls Himself; for others in the New Testament never address Him by that title. The former circumstance suggests that Christ was so called from the same or some similar reason as Ezekiel was. Many causes have been suggested of Ezekiel having been called "the son of man". The best appears

to be that of R. Abraham, that it arose from his having been used to hold frequent conversations with angels, and they, to distinguish him from themselves, who were not men, though appearing to be such, termed him "son of man". Ezekiel did not call himself this, but the angels did.

For a like reason, perhaps, Christ, as He was God, and the Son of God, when He spoke of Himself as man, called Himself the Son of man by a kind of antithesis. Not that He was another person, but in another manner—*non quod alius sed quod aliter*, "the Son of God because He was God, and the Son of man because He was man," as S. Augustin says.

From the latter reason, we may draw the probable conclusion that Christ so termed Himself not for honour, but humility, as He is termed by the Prophets "a worm" and "the reproach of men" (*Ps.* xxi. 7). For, unless it had been a term of humility, others would surely, at times, have called Him by it as well. S. Stephen, indeed, who calls Him the Son of man, does so not as a sign of humility, but, we must suppose, of honour (*Acts* vii. 55).

We observe that Ezekiel is never styled "the son of man" by himself, but by others; Christ never by others, but by Himself. He calls Himself the Son of man, therefore, to show that, when He was in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit being found as a man" (*Philipp.* ii. 6, 7).

Verse 21. *And another.*

Christ had said to him first, "Follow Me". S. Matthew does not relate this, but we find it in *S. Luke* ix. 59, who adds that he said: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father," seeking permission from Christ to do so.

Suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Some think that the father was not yet dead, but that the meaning of the passage is, Suffer me to go and be with my father, who is now an aged man, until his death, and, after he is dead and buried, I will follow Thee. De Lyra explains it thus, but the opinion of the Ancients—S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii.), S. Basil (*De Constitut. Monast.*, xxi.), Theophylact, and Euthymius—appears better. The word "bury" shows that the father was actually dead. That he was not so is not stated, and it is not likely that one whom Christ knew and called would have sought such a long and uncertain delay. Nor is it wonderful that Christ answered, "Let the dead bury their dead". The man so invited justly deserved blame for wishing to be so long absent from Christ. We may wonder that Christ did not suffer him to go and bury a dead father. It is clear that when Christ so answered, He pleased to say a thing very wonderful and beyond human expectation. They, therefore, who so speak to prove that the father was not yet dead, because they think it unlikely that Christ would have been so cruel as to refuse so short a space of time for such an act, appear not to have thoroughly understood His design. He no doubt desired to teach us that, when called by Him, we are not to lose a single day or hour even for piety, though it were to attend the burial of a dead father, but to follow Him at once, than doing which there can be no greater piety.

Verse 22. *Let the dead bury their dead.*

It is clear that Christ here pleased to practise an ambiguity of speech. When He twice used the word "dead," it is clear that the same meaning is not to be attached to it in each case; for the subjects of His words were either actually dead in both cases, or they were actually alive in both cases, and were only termed "dead" by metaphor. It could not have been so, for the dead can neither bury

the dead, nor the living bury the living. S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii.), S. Jerome, S. Ambrose (*On Ps.* xlviii.), thought that the "dead" in the first case meant the unfaithful; others more correctly understand all who think not of Christ, but of this world (S. Augustin, iv. 3, *De Trin.*; xxv. 6, *De Civitate.*; *Quæst.* 6 *de S. Matt.*; and see *Ephes.* ii. 1; v. 14; 1 *Tim.* v. 6).

Their dead.

Christ here describes as dead those who were actually so. S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, conclude that the father of the man whom Christ called was a Gentile, and that He used the word "their" as meaning, Suffer the Gentiles to bury their own Gentiles. But it is not to be supposed that Christ would have called a man who was not a Jew to preach the Gospel, when He called Paul, who was not a Gentile, but a Jew, even to preach to the Gentiles. He, therefore, calls those "their" who are dead like them, that is, who resemble them; for each is dead, though not in the same way. Or Christ calls them "their" as meaning, Let each bury his own father, his own son, his own wife, as Abraham said (*Gen.* xxiii. 4, 13).

Verse 24. *And behold a great tempest arose in the sea.*

The lake of Gennesaret. S. Luke (viii. 22) calls it a lake. No one is ignorant that this and the lake Asphaltites are called seas from their great size.

There appear to have been three other acts of Christ done here, not by accident, but by design, and by His Providence.

1. He entered a ship alone with His disciples, as S. Luke (viii. 22) says, that He might the more freely censure their want of faith (*S. Matt.* viii. 26).

2. A storm arose; for God often raises storms to try us, as He did with Job.

3. Christ slept; for it is to be thought a true and natural sleep, and not, as some have thought, simulated. We may, indeed, believe that it was voluntary and procured, that the storm might appear to have arisen while He was asleep, and, as it were, without His intention.

Verse 26. *He commanded.*

S. Mark iv. 39; *S. Luke* viii. 24, *et al.*, we read ἐπετίμησεν, "He rebuked". We find the same in other places, and it seems less remote from the Greek; but our reading of "commanded" will stand well, for ἐπετίμησεν means both "commanded" and "rebuked": Christ spoke to the winds, tempests, diseases, and the like as if they were evil spirits. For we blame rational, not mere material things, as *infra* xvii. 18; *S. Luke* iv. 35, 41; ix. 42. The reason, perhaps, is that diseases and tempests are often sent by evil spirits, as David says (*Ps.* lxxvii. 49), and as Satan sent the great wind on the four corners of the house in which the sons and daughters of Job were feasting, and overthrew it (*Job* i. 19).

Verse 27. *But the men wondered.*

What men were these? S. Jerome understands the Apostles: Bede the others who were in the ship. But it was not likely that the Apostles, who had seen so many miracles of Christ performing, would wonder; and it has been shown, on verse 24, that there are none in the ship but Christ and the Apostles. It remains that we understand others who were in other ships. For Christ could not have departed so privately but that many would have followed Him in other ships, as S. Mark (iv. 36) relates. The expression seems to be a simple Hebraism, meaning the multitude, as chap. v. 13, and *infra* xvi. 13.

Verse 28. *Two that were possessed with devils.*

S. Mark (v. 2) and S. Luke (viii. 27) mention only one,

yet it is the same history. S. Matthew mentions two, because there were two; SS. Mark and Luke one only: whether, as S. Augustin thinks (*De Cons Evang.*, xxiv.; Bede; and Strabus in his *Comment.*), theirs was of higher rank, or, as seems more probable, the other was fiercer and much more heavily tormented, being possessed by a whole legion of devils (*S. Mark* v. 9; *S. Luke* viii. 30), as is supposed by S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact. For SS. Mark and Luke, because the miracle of possession by an entire legion was singular, treat it as a singular case, and, therefore, being wholly occupied by this one, they pass over the other in silence; but they relate many things of the latter which S. Matthew omits.

Coming out of the sepulchres.

Because they lived in them (*S. Mark* v. 3; *S. Luke* viii. 27). How they could do this is easily understood from the nature of the ancient tombs. They were either hewn out of the rock, or built of stone and arched over with brick, like modern wine-cellars. This is seen in Christ's tomb, which was hewn out of the rock (xxvii. 60), into which SS. John and Peter entered (*S. John* xx. 6), and the three women with spices (*S. Luke* xxiv. 3). It has been asked why these demoniacs lived in the tombs? S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii.), Euthymius, and Theophylact say that it was the work of the devils, to lead men into the error which was in full force in the times of S. Chrysostom, as he tells us that the souls of the dead were changed into devils. S. Augustin mentions this as the opinion of some of the Platonists and certain followers of Tertullian (*De Civit.*, ix.; *ad Quodvult.*, lxxxvi.). Others suppose that the devils did this the more to torment the souls over whom they had power. We learn, from *S. Jude* 9, that Michael the archangel contended with the devil for the body of Moses. Hence probably arose the laudable custom of the Church

of placing crosses in tombs, and sprinkling them with holy water. S. Luke seems to imply the true reason (viii. 27). He says: "He wore no clothes, neither did he abide in a house, but in the sepulchres". This is said to show the extreme fierceness of the demoniacs. They probably did not live in houses, no one being able to receive them on account of their ferocity. They therefore betook themselves to the tombs.

Verse 29. *What have we to do with Thee?*

These words do not seem to mean what most suppose. This is rather to fix a wrong on Christ than to entreat Him for themselves, as if they denied that they were servants and He their Lord, like the Israelites when they separated themselves from the kingdom of David (3 *Kings* xii. 16): "What portion have we in David?" That is, What harm do we to Thee that Thou shouldst cast us out? We harm others who pass by; we touch not Thee, we attack Thee not, we worship Thee, we adore Thee, we confess Thee to be the Lord. It has been questioned whether or not these and other evil spirits knew Christ. S. Jerome, S. Augustin (*De Civit.*, ix. 21), Remigius (*Ap.*) *S. Thom.*), and many later authors say that they knew Him; not, indeed, with any certain knowledge, but from probable conjecture and suspicion. For if they had certainly known Him, they would have endeavoured to prevent His death. They did not do this, but, on the contrary, they brought it about, for they put it into the mind of Judas to deliver Him up (*S. John* xiii. 2). Soon after, when they knew Him, they endeavoured, through the wife of Pilate, to effect His deliverance (xxvii. 19).

At first, before He began to preach, the devils did not know whether He were the Son of God and the true Messiah or not. If they had known this they would not have tempted Him. They tempted Him for this very

purpose, to know the truth by experiment (iv. 3, 6). After His Temptation they certainly knew that He was the true Son of God and the true Messiah, as we may see from this passage and others like it (*S. Mark* i. 34; *S. Luke* iv. 41). The mystery of His death, and the redemption of man from their power by it, we may suppose that they did not know; otherwise they would never have stirred up the Jews to His betrayal. It is uncertain whether the dream of Pilate's wife proceeded from the devils or the angels, or was natural; but we must believe, as S. Thomas has warned us, that the devil was prevented by God from knowing much of Christ, which, if not prevented, he would have known of his own nature.

Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?

The conjunction of words in this passage is doubtful. Some unite the expression "before the time" to "art Thou come," as if the evil spirits complained that Christ had come into the world before the time. This idea seems wholly untenable. For the devils could not have been ignorant that the time of Christ's coming, as foretold by the Prophets, was now fulfilled; for men of very little learning knew this, and the word "hither" may appear to mean, not this world, but this country of the Gerasenes, into which Christ had now come, and in which the devils had previously worked their will with impunity. The words "before the time" should be taken, not with those preceding them, "art thou come," but with what follows, "to torment us before the time has arrived when we must be tormented".

It is a more important question why they said that they were tormented before the time. It is wonderful with what unanimity the greater number of the Ancients, relying on 2 *Peter* ii. 4 and *S. Jude* 6, teach that the devils are not tormented before the Day of Judgment. They explain the

meaning of S. Matthew to be, that the devils complain that they are tormented before that period; as S. Hilary (*Can.* viii.) explains it.

But we may believe, with the confirmed opinion of the Church, that the devils are tormented even now, and that, wherever they go, they carry about with them, as Strabus says in his *Commentary on Philippians* iii., their own punishment; but that they are punished in a lighter degree now because they have the power of wandering through the world and of harming men, which they will not have after the Day of Judgment. It is certain that the meaning of the words "before the time" is before the Judgment, because S. Luke says that they asked Christ not to send them into the abyss (viii. 31); as if they were thus to be tormented in the same way before their time of torment as they would be after the Judgment.

From this question springs another: Did the evil spirits know of the Day of Judgment? S. Augustin thinks that the devils supposed, when they saw Christ, that the Day of Judgment, which they did not look for yet, was at hand: "before the time," meaning with them, before we thought.

This opinion has had many followers; but that the devils do not know the Day of Judgment we cannot doubt, for the angels in heaven do not know it (xxiv. 36). They know, however, that it had not come yet, and, therefore, they complain that they were tormented before the time. But how? By being driven, against their will, out of those of whom they were in possession. And it is probable that Christ may have added some torments to them that they might go out.

Verse 30. *And there was not far from them.*

The Greek reads *ἦν δὲ μάκραν*, "And there was far from them," in a contrary sense. Some, in other respects no undue supporters of the Greek, prefer this reading, and

correct the Latin by it. Nor are they without arguments in their support. These are chiefly :

1. All the Greek copies contain an affirmation and not a negation.

2. It is probable that Christ would drive the evil spirits as far off as possible from the place which they infested.

But the Latin version still seems the less corrupt of the two. (1) Because all the copies, ancient and modern, and all the early commentators except Euthymius read it so. (2) Because S. Mark (v. 11) and S. Luke (viii. 32) say, "There were there," that is, the place spoken of by S. Matthew as "not far off". (3) Because S. Luke says (viii. 32) on the mountains, and S. Mark (v. 11) near the mountains which are near the sea. (4) Because Christ, as we shall shortly prove, suffered them to go into the swine, that they who were present and had the care of them might know from the destruction of the swine the number and ferocity of the devils ; which they would not have known if they had not seen the swine, nor have seen if they had been at a distance.

It has been asked, how swine could be there when it was unlawful for the Jews to keep them. Some suppose that the Jews of that country kept them against the law, and that, as Rupertus says, Christ willed to punish them by the very instruments of their sin. It seems more probable that Gadara and the neighbouring cities were of the Greek religion, as Josephus says (*Antiq.*, xvii. 13), and, therefore, had swine. But, then, why did Christ go there when He had not come but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (xv. 24) ? The answer may be, that not only in the Greek but also in the Latin cities were many Jews, for whose sake Christ went thither ; for Gadara belonged properly to the kingdom of Judæa, but Josephus says Cæsar had given it to the Greeks as a habitation.

Verse 31. *And the devils besought Him saying.*

The devils asked two things of Christ—one that He would not send them into the abyss (*S. Luke* viii. 31) ; the other that they might be sent into the sea. We have shown why they asked not to be sent into the abyss. Many reasons are given by the Ancients for their asking to be sent into the swine S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxix.), Euthymius, and Theophylact say that it was that the men of the country, being enraged by the loss of the swine, might not permit Him to enter their cities. The result appears to confirm this idea, for (verse 34) " they besought Him that He would depart from their coasts ". Others think that they did it from envy of the inhabitants, wishing, if they could not harm them in their persons, to do so in their property. This reason was given by the great Hilarion, as S. Jerome writes in his life, when he had cast out a devil from a monster camel. S. Jerome supports it by this passage and by the case of Job. It is rather to be wondered at why Christ permitted it. S. Jerome says that it was to bring the men of the city to repentance ; but Rupertus, as we have said, thought that it was to punish the Jews by the loss of the swine for keeping them against the law. S. Hilary suggests that it was done because of the Sadducees, who denied that there were spirits, to show them their error by the testimony of their senses.

S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius give three reasons for the act. 1. That the possessed might acknowledge the greatness of the benefit done them, by seeing from how great a number of devils they had been delivered. 2. That we might know that the devils had no power even over swine without the permission of God. 3. That they might understand what they would have suffered if they had not been delivered by God, when they saw the swine, the instant the devils entered into them, cast themselves headlong into the sea. S. Hilarion, in S. Jerome, says that

it was to show what a multitude of devils were cast out of one man when they filled a whole herd of swine. What S. Chrysostom and S. Augustin (*Tractat. on S. John*) say, that Christ desired to show that devils willingly enter into men, who live like swine, is true but mystical.

Some ask why Christ, who was so mild that He would not break a bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, caused so great a loss to these people? The answer may be that Christ wished even the swine to be subservient to the glory of God, and the salvation of men. They served the glory of God because, by their rushing headlong into the sea, they declared the power of Christ: they would have served the good of men if the people of the city, after having witnessed so great a miracle, had turned to Christ. But human malice thwarted the designs of God.

Verse 34. *They besought Him that He would depart from their coasts.*

It is uncertain why those Gadarenes would not receive Christ. S. Jerome and Bede think that it was from humility, as S. Peter said to Christ, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (*S. Luke* v. 8). Others, that it was from fear; lest He should cast out other devils from men, and send them into their cattle. This is confirmed by S. Mark (v. 15), S. Luke (viii. 35-37), who say that they were exceeding afraid. This can be believed without difficulty of the Gadarenes, who were men of little culture. For there are many even now, who, under pretence of human prudence, would rather drive Christ out of the country—that is, those who follow Christ—than swine, atheists, heretics, and men defiled with every kind of iniquity.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST HEALS ONE SICK OF THE PALSY: CALLS MATTHEW: CURES THE ISSUE OF BLOOD: RAISES TO LIFE THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS: GIVES SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN: AND HEALS A DUMB MAN POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL.

Verse 1. *And entering.*

S. MARK (ii. 3), S. Luke (v. 18), relate the following events before those in the former chapter of S. Matthew. From the events themselves it is clear that they have not preserved the order of time.

He came into His own city.

Some think that Nazareth was called the city of Christ (as *S. Luke* ii. 39). S. Jerome, in his *Commentary*, which S. Augustin does not disapprove (*De Cons.*, ii. 25), cautions us that if we follow this opinion, we must say that Christ first went up to Nazareth, His own city, and then returned from Nazareth to Capernaum, where the events that follow took place. Others understand Bethlehem, which is much further from the truth, as Sedulius says (lib. iii.):

> "Intravit natale solum quo corpore nasci
> Se voluit, patriamque sibi, pater ipse, dicavit".
>
> "He comes into His native soil, wherein
> It pleased Him in His Body to be born;
> Himself the Father; He, unto Himself,
> To dedicate a country, thought not scorn."

And there, the poet thinks, He healed the paralytic. A

better idea of the meaning is proposed by S. Augustin, S. Chrysostom, Bede, Strabus, Hugo, and N. de Lyra, that the city which is called Christ's was Capernaum. For all three Evangelists show that Christ went directly to it, and they relate immediately what was done to the paralytic. But all do not agree as to why Capernaum was called the city of Christ. The Fathers mentioned above think that it was because it was the metropolis of Galilee, to which Nazareth, the city of Christ, was subject; as men were called Romans, not only if born in Rome itself, but even if natives or inhabitants of towns subject to it. S. Chrysostom, however, with Theophylact and Euthymius, say that it was so called because Christ frequently lived in it. They say that He had three cities: Bethlehem, in which He was born; Nazareth, in which He grew up; Capernaum, in which He frequently lived. This is more probable.

Verse 2. *And behold they brought to Him.*

S. Matthew is silent on one circumstance, necessary to the understanding of the passage, which S. Mark (ii. 3) and S. Luke (v. 19) have related—that so great a multitude flocked into the house where Christ was, that no one could enter it; and that the men who brought the paralytic ascended the roof, and having made an opening in it, let the sick man down to Christ. Seeing their faith, He said: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee".

Their faith.

Some think that this faith is to be referred both to the paralytic and to those who brought him. They say that if the paralytic had not had faith he would not have suffered himself to be brought to Christ, and Christ would not have forgiven his sins. But this I can in no way approve. For although I doubt not that the paralytic had great faith, yet all the Evangelists so speak as to show

beyond doubt that Christ would only speak of the faith of those who bore him, as all say that for the faith of the centurion his servant was healed (viii. 10, 13; *S. Luke* vii. 9). So all good authorities explain it (S. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat. Lect.*, v.; S. Ambrose, v., *On S. Luke;* S. Jerome; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxx.).

Be of good heart, son.

Be of good heart, for thou shalt obtain more than thou askest. Thou askest health of thy body: thou shalt have the salvation of thy soul. S. Matthew and S. Mark say that Christ called the man "son": S. Luke (v. 20) that He called him "man". This is of no moment. For, as we have said, some of the Evangelists relate the words, others give the meaning. But it agrees better with the mildness of Christ to have called him "son" than "man," as He said afterwards to the woman with the issue of blood "daughter" (v. 22).

Thy sins are forgiven thee.

It may be justly asked why Christ forgave the paralytic his sins, when he sought not this, but the cure of his body? S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Theophylact reply that Christ wished both to indicate the origin of the disease and to remove it before He removed the disease itself. For diseases are often at once the effect and the punishment of sin. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxx.) thinks, with probability, that Christ wished to give the Scribes occasion of calumniating Him, that from their so doing He might take the opportunity of defending His Divinity. It may be thought that He desired to teach, in this way, what the paralytic ought to have sought before all things else. For He had said (vi. 33): "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you".

From this the followers of Calvin teach that sins are for-

given by faith alone. They tell us that Christ did not say to the paralytic that his sins were forgiven from seeing the acts of those who brought him, or from considering their labour in lifting him up to the top of the house, taking off the roof, and letting him down, but "seeing their faith". They confirm this as below: verse 22; *S. Mark* v. 34; *S. Luke* vii. 50; viii. 48, 50; xvii. 19; xviii. 42. Christ therefore required of those whom He would heal, faith—as *infra*, verses 28, 29, with many other passages of the like nature.

To save useless repetitions, we will answer them once for all. But we must do so, not as if treating of the whole question of faith and justification, but of the meaning of this and similar passages. I might say what all Catholics have hitherto agreed to, that we do not deny, but teach, that the first justification, which is the one treated of in all these passages, is not of works. But the former do not directly prove that it is of faith alone, for charity intervenes between faith and works, which S. Peter says "covereth a multitude of sins" (1 *Peter* iv. 8), and Christ said, "Many sins are forgiven, because she hath loved much" (*S. Luke* vii. 47). For when sins are said to be forgiven by faith, without mention of charity, we understand charity, from other passages, to be included. Where they are said to be remitted by charity, without faith, faith is included. For, as we cannot conclude from those passages in which faith is not named that sins are remitted by charity alone without faith, so in those in which charity is not named, it would be wrongly concluded that they are remitted by faith alone without charity. Especially as these say that, as charity cannot exist alone without faith, so faith cannot exist alone without charity. Thus one error confutes another. Faith is named rather than charity in justification, not because it is greater than charity, but because it is prior to it in the order of nature. We might answer thus, as all Catholics do; and enough,

and more than enough, would have been done. But this is not enough. These great theologians make a threefold faith: (1) A historical faith, by which we believe all that God has spoken to be true; (2) the faith of miracles, by which we believe that there is nothing impossible to God; (3) justifying and Christian faith, by which we believe that our sins are forgiven for the merits of Christ. These three kinds of faith in us—for they make their faith like the strings of a lyre, not like the faith of Religion—answer to the three properties in God: the historical to His truth, the faith in miracles to His power, the justifying faith to His goodness. And not to every kind of goodness, but to that properly by which, when as yet we were sinners, as S. Paul says (*Rom.* v. 8), Christ died for us. We are justified, not by the first, nor by the second, but only by the third.

In all the passages which they have heaped together so diligently there is no mention of their justifying faith. "Jesus seeing their faith." What faith? That certainly of the miracles by which they believed that the paralytic could be healed by Christ: not their justifying faith, of which they did not even think, as they had never heard of it, nor Christ either when He said that He was about to die for the sins of men; nor can they say that the men believed implicitly, for they had no implicit faith, nor explicit either. Christ said of the centurion: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. Go, and as thou hast believed so be it done to thee" (*S. Matt.* viii. 10, 13). What faith was this? Not justifying faith assuredly, of which the centurion could not have had any possible idea, but the faith of miracles by which he had said: "Lord, I am not worthy". Christ said to the woman with the issue of blood: "Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole" (ix. 22). What faith? That of miracles, by which she had said within

herself, "If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed". It is clear, from these and other examples brought up by them, that Christ required that faith from those whom He healed, as in verse 28: "Do you believe that I can do this unto you?" In the greater number of these passages it is not a question of the faith of the sick persons themselves, but of that of others. Here it is that of the persons who let the paralytic down from the roof. In chap. viii. 8, not of the sick servant, but of the centurion who entreated for him. In *S. Luke* viii. 50, not of the daughter who was dead, but of the ruler of the synagogue. In *S. Mark* ix. 23, not of the faith of the son who had a dumb devil, but of the father who prayed for him and to whom Christ said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth". But, in the opinion of these men, persons grown cannot be justified by the faith of another, but only by their own faith. "We are saved," they say, "by apprehending the righteousness of Christ, and, by apprehending it, making it our own; by our own act we are justified, that is, being covered and clothed by the righteousness of Christ, we appear before God, and are accounted, righteous." We deceive God then, not appease Him. If so, it necessarily follows that each is justified by his own faith, and not by another's, and one can no more be justified by the faith by which another believes for him, than he can be adorned or warmed by a garment which another puts on for him. For by faith they say we put on the righteousness of Christ, by the adornment of which we are not righteous, but we appear to be so. There was Malchus whose ear Peter cut off, and whom Christ healed (*S. John* xviii. 10). We do not believe that he was justified, for he was healed not for his own faith, but from the loving-kindness of Christ, who would not break a bruised reed. We believe that the others who were cured by faith, were cured in their souls not by faith alone, but by the

same faith as that by which their bodies were healed. Not by that faith which they call the only justifying and Christian faith, and by which they pretend to apprehend Christ, but by that which is contained in the Apostles' Creed, and which is the same as historical faith, and the faith in miracles, and justifying faith. If these men had the one faith, they would have every faith. Because they have a threefold faith, they have no faith at all.

How, then, were the sins of the paralytic forgiven because of the faith of those who bore him? The ancient Fathers, as we have said in chap. xiii., have all affirmed absolutely that the sins of one can be forgiven for the faith of another, and they bring this passage as a most powerful proof. This is indeed true, but it must be understood as if their sins were forgiven not only by the faith of others but by their own faith as well, whilst the latter is aided by the former.

We must not believe that the sins of those who have no faith are forgiven by the faith of others, but that they may be forgiven whose faith is so weak that if God did not regard the faith of those who pray for them He would not forgive them. Although it may be probable that this paralytic had not less faith than that of those who bore him—that is, he had faith sufficiently great—yet Christ is said to have forgiven his sins for their sake, because He so valued it that, even if the paralytic himself had had less than was necessary, yet, moved by their faith, He would have forgiven him. There is another way in which sins are forgiven for the faith of others: when the prayers of others obtain faith for those who either do nothing or do wickedly, or who certainly have no faith; as S. Augustin says more than once that S. Stephen obtained faith for S. Paul.

Verse 3. *Certain of the Scribes said within themselves.*

Ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. Some have thought from the Greek *ἐν* that they murmured one with another; but it is plain from verse

4 that the meaning is not among themselves, but inwardly; that is, they thought that Christ was blaspheming; for the Evangelist does not say, "When Christ heard," or "When He knew their words," but "Seeing their thoughts"; and He did not say, "Why do you murmur?" but "Why do you think evil within your hearts?" The expression, "said within themselves," is a Hebraism for "to think," as iii. 9 and ix. 21; *S. Luke* vii. 39, 49; xvi. 3; xviii. 4; so *Psalms* iv. 5, 10; xi. 13, according to the Hebrew, and in numberless other places, as S. Augustin has observed (*De Trin.*, xv. 10).

He blasphemeth.

They brought this accusation against Christ, because He assumed a property of God—the power to forgive sins; for they had read the words of Isaiah (xliii. 25), but they had not read, or had not understood, what the Prophet says (liii. 6), nor remembered the words of S. John Baptist (*S. John* i. 29): "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world". The other Evangelists state the reason of the Pharisees having brought this charge against Him (*S. Mark* ii. 7; *S. Luke* v. 21).

Verse 4. *And Jesus seeing their thoughts.*

The Evangelist has recorded each event with profound design. 1. The Pharisees not having spoken out, but only thought within themselves. 2. Christ's knowledge of their thoughts, not by mere conjecture, but as if He had seen them with His eyes, to show His Divinity. S. Mark relates it more at length (ii. 8). Holy Scripture everywhere shows that God alone knows the hearts and thoughts of men. Hence, from this passage, the ancient Fathers have rightly concluded the Godhead of Christ.

Whether is easier to say.

"To say" is put here not for spoken words alone, nor things alone. If we only regard the words, it is as easy to

say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," as "Arise, take up thy bed," &c. If things, it is much more difficult to forgive sins than to cure the relaxed limbs of a paralytic; for what some say—that it is equally difficult to cure the body by our own power and to forgive sins—is not to be listened to. The saying of S. Augustin (*Tract. on S. John* xxvii.) is true: that it is more difficult to make a man righteous than to create a heavens and an earth. But the word (*dicere*, to say) is put for words joined with the outward proof of the result. In this way it is more difficult to say, "Arise and walk," than "Thy sins are forgiven thee," because the hearers cannot see whether the sins are truly forgiven or not, but they cannot help seeing whether the paralytic arises and walks. So that in the former case the authority of the speaker, as it cannot be convicted of falsehood, cannot be endangered; in the latter, because there can be ocular proof, the speaker is brought under danger. In this sense S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Bede, and Theophylact explain it. And not only they who seek another meaning, but they who find one, seem to me to lose their labour.

It may be doubted how Christ concluded that which should have been proved; for if it were indeed more difficult to forgive sins, whilst the evidence of the restored paralytic shows that Christ could do that which was more easy in itself, it does not thoroughly prove that He could also remit sins, which is more difficult. The answer may be that Christ only desired to show that they ought to believe in Him. This He well proves by an act, the proof of which was more difficult. As if He had said, "If I do not deceive you when I say to the paralytic, 'Arise and walk,' where the proof that I am speaking the truth is more difficult, why do you think that I am deceiving you when I say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'?" Thus, from a fact which can be proved by the result; in another which cannot, He causes faith in Himself.

Verse 6. *But that you may know.*

Some have thought these the words of the Evangelist. This is not probable, both because the sense requires that Christ should have said this Himself to show the Scribes that He had power to forgive sins; and, besides, all the Evangelists (*S. Mark* ii. 10; *S. Luke* v. 24) give the same words, which they would not have done if they had been their own and not Christ's. Many have supposed that Christ desired to prove that He was God, and therefore that He did not blaspheme when He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee". But the meaning of the whole seems to be that Christ appears to prove that God alone has not the power to forgive sins. It is probable that He desired to prove the contrary of what the Scribes thought. They thought that God alone has power to forgive sins, and that Christ was not God. Christ proves both that He was God, and that, even as man, He could forgive sins. Not as any man whatever, but as man who was God. He did not so much prove that He was God by argument, as demonstrate it by fact, when He showed them what they had in their thoughts. He proves that, as man, He could forgive sins by the argument in verse 5; and the words, "the Son of man," and "on earth," seem to have this force. For He did not say, "That you may know that the Son of God has power," but "the Son of man," and He did not say, "in heaven," but "upon earth"—to show that, even as man, He could forgive sins. The Novatians perverted this passage to prove that the priesthood could not forgive sins, and the heirs of their doctrine, the disciples of Calvin, follow their example in the present day. S. Ambrose, in his two books *De Pœnit.*, has given a full reply; and from what has been already said, the task is easy. As the power of the remission of sins was communicated to Christ, even in His human nature, by the Godhead, so it was shared by Christ as the head with whatever members He chose, that is, with

the priesthood. We see this even in His power of working miracles, which, as a property of God, was shared by the Godhead of Christ with the Humanity, and was communicated by Him to the Apostles, except that Christ acted by His own power, and the others did both actions by His.

Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.

Christ added these words as a clear proof of the cure; nor can it be considered a simulated or imperfect cure, when a paralytic, deprived of the use of his limbs, rose up, placed the bed on which he had been lying on his shoulders, and carried it to his house, as S. Chrysostom has observed.

Verse 8. *Feared.*

The Greek reads ἐθαύμασαν—"wondered". Although the Greek properly means wondered, it is here used for feared. For there is a wonder which comes from joy, and there is a wonder which springs from fear. S. Luke (v. 26) calls that ἔκστασιν, *stuporem*, which S. Matthew here calls θαύμασιον, and explains to mean violent terror. Fear is, beyond doubt, to be understood here. Not that which is derived from hatred, but that which comes of a high opinion of and reverence for another. There is a remarkable example of this in 3 *Kings* iii. 28. When the people saw the wisdom of Solomon in his judgment between the two harlots, it is said that they feared him. As fear is put there for admiration, so admiration is put in this place for fear.

Verse 9. *And when Jesus passed on from thence.*

Returning to the sea, as S. Mark explains it (ii. 13), we have referred to this calling of the Apostles (v. 1).

In the custom-house.

At the table of the publicans, at which the public taxes of Cæsar were collected. From τέλος, which signifies a

tax, is derived τελώνιον. The *telonium* was the place in which the taxes were collected. As the revenue was mostly paid in money which was told out upon a table, the table was also so called, and S. Matthew is, therefore, said to have sat at the *telonium*, that is, at the table. The tribute does not appear to have been originally collected from house to house, but to have been brought to some particular spot. It is probable that the table at which S. Matthew sat was not in his own house, but in some public place near the shore, for the more easy collection of the tax upon goods that were brought to the sea. For S. Mark (ii. 15) and S. Luke (v. 29) signify that Christ went thence into the house of Matthew, who made a great feast for him.

Named Matthew.

S. Mark (ii. 14) and S. Luke (v. 27-29) mention him as Matthew by name, and Levi by surname. The latter appears to have been the more honourable of the two names, for we observe that he never calls himself Levi but always Matthew, for modesty ; but others call him Levi, as well as Matthew, for honour, as S. Jerome has observed.

Verse 10. *In the house.*

Of the same Matthew (*S. Mark* ii. 15 ; *S. Luke* v. 29).

Verse 13. *Go.*

In Hebrew לכו ואמרו. So *Judges* x. 14.

Learn.

Christ sends these doctors of the law to school to show their ignorance of that in the knowledge of which they chiefly prided themselves, as Euthymius has observed. Christ did the same in other places (xii. 3-5 ; xix. 4 ; xxi. 16, 42 ; xxii. 31 ; *S. Mark* xii. 10, 26). We have said (ii. 4) that the Pharisees were teachers of the law.

I will have mercy.

We must first ask to what end Christ said this. For He was not now speaking of sacrifice or mercy. The answer is that His mercy in calling sinners to repentance was great, as He said soon after, and which, as He proves from the greater to the less, is to be preferred to all things. If, as the Prophet said, it is to be preferred to the Sacrifice which was offered to God, to what is it not to be preferred? as Christ said above (v. 24, 25). Euthymius explains it in this sense.

And not sacrifice.

Christ does not deny that He desires sacrifice, since He instituted it Himself, and commanded it to be offered to Himself; but He says that He would rather have mercy, that is, an inward rather than an outward sacrifice. If either must be wanting, He would rather that it were the outward, which consisted of victims offered to God, than the inward one in the heart. It is a Hebrew idiom by which they are accustomed, when they prefer one thing to another, not to speak more highly of the thing preferred, and more slightingly of the other, but to speak of the former exclusively and to ignore the other altogether, as: "My doctrine is not Mine," that is, as it is the Father's who gave it to Me and from whom I received it (*S. John* vii. 16; *infra*, x. 20; *Rom.* ix. 16). It is not so much, that is, of man that willeth, as of God that has mercy. So S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxi.); and therefore S. Ambrose (ii. *De Pœnitentia*) reads: "I will rather have mercy than sacrifice". S. Augustin (xx. 16, *Cont. Faust.*, and ii. 27, *De Consens.*): "I would rather (*volo*) have mercy than (*quam*) sacrifice". It was a form of speech frequently used to the time of S. Gregory, derived probably from the version in use in the Latin Church before S. Jerome, The Author having possibly followed the Hebraism.

וזה חפצתי מזוה—"and said I would rather (*volo*) have

this than (*quam*) that," that is, I prefer (*malo*) this. S. Augustin (*De Civit.*, x. 5) and Cæsarius (*Hom.* xxxvi.) read: "I would rather have mercy than sacrifice" (*magis volo quam*), regarding perhaps rather the meaning of the passage than the words. That this is the meaning of the Prophet (*Osee* vi. 6) is clear, from whom the words are taken; for there follows the sentence: "The knowledge of God is more than holocausts". By sacrifice, which was an outward worship, all outward worship: and by mercy, which is an inward one, all works of charity are to be understood.

I am not come to call the just but sinners.

There are two questions on these words:

1. Whether when He came Christ found any just?
2. Whether He came for these also, if there were any?

The heretics of this age, the followers of Luther and Calvin, deny that there were any really just, not only when Christ came but also afterwards. But surely Zacharias and Elizabeth were just, however they define the word. Besides, they deny not only that there were, but that there could possibly be, any just; for no man, they say, is able to fulfil the whole law. But S. Luke (i. 6) says of Zachary and Elizabeth: "They were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord, without blame". They were just, not as reputed so, but they were so; and not before men alone but also before God, and not because sin was not imputed to them, but because they had no sin; that is, because they kept the law which these persons declare it to be impossible to keep, so that nothing could possibly be wanting in them.

If then Elizabeth were such as Mary, of whom she said, "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" we may believe that others, not mentioned in Scripture, were also just, because it is clear from these that they could be so. Christ called Nathaniel a true

Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile (1 *S. John* i. 47). By this expression Scripture commonly describes a man perfectly just, as in *Ps.* xiv. 3; xxxi. 2. Lastly, it was said, to His great praise, of Christ Himself, that "He did no iniquity, neither was there deceit in His mouth" (*Isa.* liii. 9).

On the other hand, Scripture teaches that all men are sinners (*Rom.* iii. 22, 23; 2 *Cor.* v. 14, 15). So all the ancient Fathers say that when Christ came He found no man just: for He said, "I am not come to call the just but sinners"; not that some were just, but that some thought themselves so, like the Pharisees to whom He said this. He did not come to these, not because He did not come to all, but because they who thought themselves just, like a sick man who fancies that nothing ails him will not consult the physician. Christ therefore said to them: "If you were blind you should not have sin, but now you say, We see, your sin remaineth".

S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxi.), S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius think that they are called just, as in irony. Scripture, however, which seems in this to be opposed to itself, is to be thus harmonised with itself; Christ when He came found, as has been proved, some just, and yet other Scriptures teach that He would find none such; some there were truly just, none who were so *per se*, that is, without Christ Himself. For they who were just before Christ's advent were only so through His grace and faith, and by the power of His future coming, as S. Peter testifies (*Acts* xv. 11). Even she herself, the most just of all the just, whom we believe to have been preserved from the taint of original sin, is to be numbered among those who have need of God's grace, and for whom also Christ came. For if He had not come she could not have been preserved by His grace.

The second question remains:

How did Christ say that He had not come to call the just, when no one, without His preventing grace, ever could be just? He did not come to call the just, that is, those who thought themselves so. Not that He would not call them, but that even if He did call them they would not come. This explanation may be accepted; but, for my own part, I understand the words to mean that Christ did not come to call the just, but sinners, as the ninety-nine sheep which had not strayed were left in the wilderness that He might seek the one which had strayed (xviii. 12). This does not mean, as some explain it, that He left the angels to seek men, nor the ninety-nine men who had not erred to seek the one who had, as if everyone except the ninety-ninth had been a sinner, for "All have turned aside into their own way" (*Isa.* lvi. 11), and "They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (*Ps.* xiii. 3 and *Ps.* lii. 4); but it means that Christ was so good and merciful that if there had been only one hundred men, and ninety-nine were just and one was unjust, He would have left the ninety-nine just to seek the one unjust; and for his sake alone He would have come into the world and endured death.

In like manner, He does not signify here that some, without the grace of His coming, would have been just: to call whom He did not come: but that He so seeks sinners that if there had been any just He would not have come for them, but for sinners. This appears to be the meaning of the passage; and, therefore, the opinion of those who think that, even if man had not sinned, Christ would still have come, seems opposed, not only to it, but to Scripture, and, while it makes the benefit of Christ uncertain, it appears to weaken the certainty of our redemption, than which nothing can be more certain.

Verse 14. *Then came to Him the disciples of John.*

When the others had been answered. S. Luke (v. 33) says that the Pharisees themselves came. S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 27) harmonises this by saying that both came, but that S. Luke mentioned only the Pharisees, S. Matthew only the disciples of John. But S. Matthew seems to speak as if he wished to signify that the Pharisees did not venture to come to Christ; for they had said a little before (verse 11), not to Christ, but to His disciples, "Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?"

It would seem more likely that the disciples of John were sent by the Pharisees secretly. They would do this perhaps the more readily because there would appear to have been some little emulation between the disciples of John and those of Christ (*S. John* iii. 26). Besides, S. Luke says that the Pharisees came because, at their instigation, the disciples of John came.

But Thy disciples do not fast.

(*S. Luke* v. 33). As if they wished to mark an immoderate use of food and drink. This is very probable, and is more in accordance with the spirit of the Pharisees; for, by the words "eat" and "drink," they wished to notify the intemperance of the disciples, and through them to brand the Master Himself. Christ alludes to this (xi. 18, 19). They were blown up in their opinion and praised themselves: "Why do we fast?" Lest they should appear to praise themselves, they take the disciples of John as their fellow-partners in the praise. They accuse Christ and His disciples, not only of the want of religion, but also of being intemperate and drunken. By their words, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often?" (verse 14), they hint at more than they say. Wherefore we and not Thou? unless that we are holy and just and are of God, Thou a sinner and of men. When we fast, you meanwhile sit at table and

banquet and take your pleasure with men that are sinners.

Verse 15. *Can the children of the bridegroom?*

οἱ υἱοι τοῦ νύμφωνος, or, as our version reads in *S. Mark* ii. 19, the children of the marriage. It is plain who are meant by the children of the bridegroom or of the marriage, for Christ speaks of His disciples, of whom the question was proposed. But why they were so called has been matter of doubt. S. Ambrose (v., *On S. Luke*), S. Jerome, Bede (in his *Comment.*), think that they were so called because they were spiritually born of Christ. They seem more correct who say that it is a Hebraism, by which the friends of the bridegroom are called the sons of the bridegroom, or of the marriage. They keep his marriage with various signs of joy, such as are celebrated in our corrupt times by feasts, dances, games; but then by feasts like that of the marriage of Cana of Galilee. Christ therefore said that they could not fast, because it was opposed to the celebration of marriage; for, as they who are of the kingdom are called the children of the kingdom, so they who celebrate the marriage are called the sons of the marriage, or friends of the bridegroom, as S. John Baptist calls himself (iii. 29); but Christ is the bridegroom, as is shown in the parable of the marriage (xxii. 2; xxv. 1, 5, 6, 10; *Apoc.* xix. 7, 9). His espousals, if we may so speak, are celebrated here (*S. Matt.* xxii. 2; xxv. 1), but the marriage in heaven, where He in a manner consummates it with the Church, His bride (*Apoc.* xix. 7, 9), because He will then introduce her into His chamber, that is, into heaven, where she enjoys His perpetual embraces.

Mourn.

Why did Christ not say fast, because there was no question of mourning, but of fasting only? This compre-

hends all other kinds of grief, and Christ answers more than His adversaries asked—so that from denial of the genus He might go on to that of the species with more force. For if one cannot be an animal, how can he be a man? If the sons of the bridegroom cannot mourn, how can they fast? To mourn here does not mean to shed tears or to lament, but to be sad, and, as the Latins say, to be in grief and disorder: as the dead are said to be mourned for a time, not because the living lament them continually, but because they wear a mourning garment for them.

It may be asked why S. John Baptist and his disciples fasted, if the sons of the bride-chamber cannot fast. For he also was a son, that is, a friend of the Bridegroom, who heard his voice and was glad (*S. John* iii. 29). The answer may be that this was done necessarily that all men might by all means be enticed into salvation, and that, both by a singular mode of life, like S. John's, and a general one, like Christ's—as Christ Himself signifies (xi. 18, 19). Besides, though S. John was a friend of the Bridegroom, he was not properly a son, that is, a disciple. He prepared the way for others to come to the marriage, but he did not come himself. They who came would have to come by a rough way; when they had come they would have, not a rough, but a joyful and pleasant life, as long as they were with the bridegroom, as a festive celebration required. But why did not Christ Himself, if not His disciples, fast? For the same reason. He was the Bridegroom, and was celebrating His own marriage, but He Himself gives another reason (verse 16).

But the days will come.

Christ says "days" by a Hebraism for time. They would have plenty of time to fast when the Bridegroom was taken from them. Christ does not say when He shall have departed from them, nor when He is dead, but

"when He shall be taken from them," signifying that He would be miserably taken away by those very Pharisees with whom He was now speaking. "Then," He said, "they shall fast." That is, then they shall mourn. For, as He previously said mourn for fast, the genus for the species, so He now says fast for mourn, the species for the genus, as if He had said: "As they are now celebrating My marriage, and therefore do not fast, so then they shall mourn My death, and therefore they shall fast". Christ alludes to the custom of mourning for the dead with fasting; for they who mourn generally abstain from food. The event not only proved this saying, but also made it clear. For we know how continual the Apostles were after the Ascension of Christ in fasting and prayers (*Acts* xiii. 3; 2 *Cor.* vi. 5), in stripes, in imprisonment, in seditions, in labours, in watchings many, in hunger, in thirst, in fastings many.

Verse 16. *And nobody putteth.*

Christ said this to show that He did wisely in not compelling His disciples to fast, as S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxi.), and Remigius have taught. Christ proves this by two examples: the one of the piece of new cloth in the old garment, and the other of the new wine in the old bottles—things which have no especial mutual agreement.

The meaning is easy; the adaptation of words and examples is difficult. Christ, no doubt, willed to show that their mode of life should be adapted to the catching of disciples and their manner of life, lest, if they had been compelled to fast in the beginning, they might have been deterred from continuing what they had begun. It is therefore certain that the disciples are compared to a garment and to old bottles, and an austere and rough kind of life to a patch of cloth, new as yet, and to new wine. The meaning is that, as a patch of new cloth is not added to an old garment because it tears it worse, and new wine is not put

into old bottles because it would burst them, when weakened by age, through the fermentation of the wine, so it is not fit that a life of greater hardship, and altogether unlike their former one, should be prescribed to disciples accustomed to ease, lest they should go back from the new course which they had entered upon hopefully. So Euthymius and Theophylact understand it, nor, apparently, can a better explanation be desired. Tertullian (iii., iv., *Cont. Marc.*) says that the old garment and the old bottles are the ancient Law, and the new cloth and the new wine are the Gospel; or, at least, he does not oppose them when they say so. S. Ambrose, however (viii., *On S. Luke*), says that the old garment and the old bottles are the fast; S. Hilary, S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, and Bede, that they are the Pharisees; S. Augustin (*Serm.* clxxxvi. *de Temp.*), that they are all carnal men. "The carnal man," he says, "does not receive spiritual things; the carnal is the ancient, grace is the new." The first opinion seems the best.

It may be objected that John's disciples were the old garment and the old bottles, and that he proposed fasts and a very hard life to them. It has been answered, on verse 15, that he did this of necessity, because he was preparing the way to Christ, which must needs be one of hardship and difficulty; that is, a life full of tears, fasts, and every kind of penitence. But it was necessary that the Lord should be more kind and mild than the servant, and should anoint those whom the servant had wounded.

Again, it may be objected that the disciples of Christ were new, and could not be compared to old garments and old bottles. In reply, either through infirmity, as Euthymius thinks, or, as seems more probable, through their former wholly dissimilar modes of life, they are called "old". For as yet, not having laid aside their original habits, like a garment worn out or old bottles, they were feeble and unable to contain new wine. "I have yet

many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (*S. John* xvi. 12).

It may also be said that fasting was an ancient and approved custom, and that the Pharisees objected to Christ that neither He nor His disciples fasted, as if they were careless about keeping ancient customs. There were certain fasts enjoined by the old Law of which S. Luke speaks (*Acts* xxvii. 9), but the Pharisees did not allude to these, which were of ancient date and universal observance, like the fasts of the Church now, but to their own and to those of John's disciples, which were not commanded nor common, but voluntary and peculiar to themselves, and by keeping which they boasted themselves to be Pharisees; that is, singular persons, more holy than the rest, as the Pharisee, in *S. Luke* xviii. 11, 12, who, when praying in the Temple, said: "O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men," &c. As to the opinion of Marcion, derived from this passage, that there was so great a difference between the Old Testament and the New, that there could not have been one and the same author of both, Tertullian (iii., iv., *Cont. Marc.*), and S. Epiphanius (*Her.* xlii.) have sufficiently refuted it, and it is not worth further consideration. S. Augustin (viii., *Cont. Faust.*) has replied to a similar heresy of the Manicheans.

A piece.

Ἐπίβλημα. An *additament*, as some render it, or rather, if the Latin would allow it, an addition (*adjectamentum*).

It taketh away the fulness thereof.

This is an ambiguous sentence, because the Greek τὸ πλήρωμα may be either the nominative case or the accusative. If the nominative, the meaning will be that the fulness of it, that is, the patch, which was added to the old garment to fill up whatever was wanting, will take some-

thing from it; that is, will wear it away and tear it. This sense, Theodore, the Interpreter of the heretics, has followed both in his rendering and explaining of the passage; and, as it appears, with very little judgment. If an accusative, the meaning may be twofold—(1) The subject of the word *tollit* is repeated from the word *immittit*, as if Christ had said: "Otherwise whoever does this takes away fulness from the garment". This is the explanation of Erasmus, and is better than Beza's, because, although Beza makes τὸ πλήρωμα not the nominative case, but the accusative, he does so erroneously, referring the word "*tollit*" to the person who added the patch.

Nothing can be better than our own version, because the Evangelist calls that part of the garment which, when the patch was put in, was entire, πλήρωμα, "the fulness"—and which, not he who added the cloth, but the cloth itself, takes away by its stiffness. Christ, according to the Hebrew custom, calls מלא which means whole and entire, "fulness"; as in the example which follows, not he who put the new wine into the old bottles, but the new wine itself, because it was too strong for the old bottles to bear, burst them; that is, took away their fulness. The meaning is, that if a new patch is inserted into an old garment, or if new wine is put into old bottles, that which ought to preserve the garment destroys it, and the wine, which is put into the bottles to preserve it, by bursting the bottles, renders its preservation impossible. So, if too hard a mode of life be prescribed for disciples, who were previously weak and accustomed to old habits, for their improvement; the very thing which ought to make them better, by deterring, repelling, and driving them away, makes them worse; and that which was committed to them, like the new wine in the old bottles, to preserve and perfect them, as they are unable to bear it, destroys them by a kind of despair, and the wine perishes. Judas affords

a living proof of this. The office of an Apostle was committed to him when he was not fit for it, and, like the new wine in the old bottles, not only in his life but in his very person, like a bottle too much blown up, he burst asunder and the wine was lost; that is, the apostolic office was in some measure affected with dishonour.

Verse 18. *A certain ruler.*

By name Jairus (*S. Mark* v. 22; *S. Luke* viii. 41). He who presided over a synagogue was called the ruler of the synagogue, as in our schools we have the title of "dean of the faculty".

Is even now dead.

There appears to be a great divarication between S. Matthew and the other Evangelists. For S. Mark (v. 23) says not that the young girl was dead, but that she was at the point of death. S. Luke (viii. 42), that she was dying. Bede, Euthymius, Theophylact, reconcile them by the suggestion that the ruler did not say that his daughter was actually dead; but that either she was so grievously sick, when he left his house, as to make him think her to be now dead, or that his grief had exaggerated his prayer. S. Augustin (ii., *De Consens.*) says that S. Matthew did not relate what the ruler said, but what he thought. It is more likely that he said both that she was at the point of death and that she was now dead. At first he said that she was at the point of death, and afterwards his attendants came and told him of her death, as S. Mark (v. 35), S. Luke (viii. 49), have said. And then the ruler said to Christ what S. Matthew has related—that his daughter was dead.

It seems as if the ruler had not said at once what S. Matthew says he did (verse 18), "My daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live," but only the words "come, lay thy hand," &c., before he knew that she was dead. But when he heard of this he

rather asked, or thought to ask Him, not to come because she was dead. For (1) SS. Mark and Luke thus relate it; and (2) when the messenger had brought the information of the death, Christ said to him, "Fear not," &c. (*S. Mark* v. 36): as if he had begun to fear lest Christ, who was able to heal the dying, could not raise the dead, and it did not seem credible that a Jew, and he a ruler of the synagogue, should have had so much faith as to believe that Christ, by the touch of His hand, could recall to life a young girl already dead.

Verse 20. *And behold a woman.*

She was an inhabitant of Cæsarea Philippi. She erected a statue of Christ before her house in remembrance of the benefit He had conferred upon her, as Eusebius (vii. 28) and Sozomen (v. 21) relate. Theophylact also mentions it on this place. The assertion of S. Ambrose (lib. v.), in his work on Solomon, that she was Martha, the sister of Lazarus, seems scarcely probable.

Twelve years.

The length of time, and the woman's having spent all that she had, and being nothing better but rather worse, show that the disease was not only inveterate but also incurable, so that the miracle of its being healed appears the greater.

Came behind Him.

There was no reason for this, except, as some think, her humility, as both S. Mark (v. 33) and S. Luke (viii. 47) say, or, as is suggested by Optatus (v., *Cont. Parmen.*) and S. Ambrose (*De Solom.*, chap. v.), her shame; because she was afflicted with a loathsome disease; or, as others say, she was compelled by the law (*Levit.* xv. 25) to keep herself separate from the society of men.

Verse 22. *But Jesus, turning and seeing her.*

He turned as if He did not know, and would ask who had touched Him, as the other Evangelists say. He did this that the woman, seeing that she could not be hid, might come forward and show herself, and confess the miracle by the lips, not of Him who had performed it, but of herself who was the object of it. S. Luke (viii. 46) says, "And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me". He spoke as man, as if virtue had gone out of Him, as blood issues from the body when a vessel has been divided. S. Luke states that the disciples said to Christ: "Master, the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say, Who touched Me?" (viii. 45). On these words S. Augustin has more than once observed that not all who follow Christ and touch Him, touch Him truly, but rather press Him. They who come to Him in faith, and so gain a blessing, touch Him truly. "By faith," says S. Ambrose, "Christ is touched" (lib. vi., *in Luc.*).

Be of good cheer, daughter.

It seems that the woman, when she saw that Christ asked who had touched Him, feared greatly, as if she had committed a sacrilege, and stolen her cure in a surreptitious manner, as S. Chrysostom says, and was to pay the penalty of her rashness, as S. Mark (v. 33) and S. Luke (viii. 47) say. She is therefore bid to be of good heart, that is, not to fear, but to have confidence. It is of little moment that S. Mark says that Christ called her "woman," and S. Matthew "daughter"; one gives the words, the other the meaning. Which gives the word? S. Matthew, probably because it was more in accordance with the loving-kindness and custom of Christ to call her "daughter" than "woman," especially as He sought to allay her fears and trembling by gentle words, like those in verse 2, "Be of good heart, son, thy sins be forgiven thee".

Some have asked why Christ wished that the miracle should not be concealed? S. Chrysostom and Theophylact answer, "that the glory of God might appear the more clearly, and the faith of the ruler of the synagogue be confirmed".

Verse 23. *The minstrels.*

It is the opinion of Theophylact that because the damsel was unmarried and, as SS. Mark and Luke say, about twelve years of age, the minstrels which were present at marriages should be also at the funeral, according to the custom of the Gentiles. But that this was the custom we have no authority but his for believing. S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke*, lib. viii.) is more probably correct. He says that it was the custom of the Gentiles to summon female mourners and minstrels, who might excite the tears of the spectators by their mournful songs, and that the custom had now reached the Jews. Of these "mourning women" Jeremiah makes mention (ix. 17). We have no other example in Scripture, but a profane poet has said:

> "Cantabit mæstis tibia funeribus."—Ovid, *Fast.* iv.
> (The pipe shall sound at the sad funeral.)

The Evangelist relates these details to increase the miracle, proving that the damsel was really dead, as the minstrels had been summoned to afflict the whole house by their death songs. With the same view SS. Mark and Luke have said that the messenger came to the ruler and told him that his daughter was dead, and that there was no need to trouble Christ further.

Verse 24. *Give place.*

Various authors have given various reasons for this. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxiii.), S. Hilary, and Theophylact think that it was because the people were in a tumult: because they had not faith; because they mocked and derided Christ when He said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth".

The truth may be gathered without difficulty from SS. Mark (v. 43) and Luke (viii. 56). For each relates that Christ urgently commanded the parents not to let any know of it. Hence He excluded the multitude, which cannot retain a secret. He also said, "The girl is not dead but sleepeth," that when they should see her walk, they might think that she had not been raised from the dead, but awaked from sleep.

The girl is not dead, but sleepeth.

It has been asked in what sense Christ said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth"? Many think that He spoke according to the Scriptures, which call the dead sleeping because all things live to God (S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, *in loc.*). But Christ not only says that she sleeps, but declares that she was not dead; while Scripture, though it calls the dead sleeping because they will rise again, does not deny that they are dead. Christ, as we have said, held the multitude in suspense by an ambiguity of speech, and desired to persuade them that she was not dead. Nor did He say, as others think, that she slept, and was not dead, to show that she should be raised again by Him, as He said of Lazarus: "Lazarus our friend sleepeth" (*S. John* xi. 11-12). He did not deny that Lazarus was dead, but rather affirmed it when He said, "he sleeps," because when the disciples did not understand, He said plainly, "Lazarus is dead" (verse 14). But here He says, and wishes it to be believed, that the girl was not dead, and when they did not understand but derided Him, He would not explain how she was sleeping. He wished, then, to signify that she was not truly dead, but sleeping, that, as was said on the preceding verse, the multitude might thus think that she was wakened from sleep, and not raised from the dead, and not publish as a miracle that which they held to be no miracle at all. He said that

she was not dead, indeed; not that she was not so, but not in the way they thought, so as that she could not be recalled to life. For if the multitude had known that she would shortly rise again, when she actually did so, they would have thought that she was not dead, but sleeping. Christ therefore speaks from their opinion; not from that which they actually had, for they believed that she was truly dead; but from that which He knew that they would have, if they had known that she would shortly rise again.

Verse 25. *He took her by the hand.*

He could have raised her by a word alone, but He took her by the hand, because the father had asked Him to lay His hands upon her (verse 18), and to show that He would raise her (who was no otherwise dead than sleeping, as He had said before), by taking her hand. For when we wish to rouse or relieve those who are asleep, or in pain, we take them by the hand, as Christ raised up Peter's wife's mother by touching her hand (vii. 15). We have given other reasons why Christ used to touch the sick or the dead with His hand, on viii. 3-15.

And He said.

He commanded the soul to return because He had the keys of death and hell (*Apoc.* i. 18; 1 *Kings* ii. 6; *S. Luke* viii. 54). He cried out also, as on the resurrection of Lazarus (*S. John* xi. 43), not that He had need of any voice loud or soft, but that He might speak after the manner of men, who call those who are at a great distance with a loud voice; as if He wished to show not only that the damsel was dead, but that her soul was a long way off. Where was it? We know not. But if anything can be known, we may more properly look for it in *S. Luke* xvi. 22, a description which will supply us both with an opportunity of discussion and with arguments.

SS. Mark and Luke say that Christ strictly charged both the father and mother to tell no man of what had happened. Why He did so we know not, but we know that He acted with the highest reason and wisdom; probably with the design of avoiding the ill-will of the Pharisees and Scribes; for if they could not endure the lesser miracles, what would they have done if they had heard of a resurrection from the dead? We observe that Christ only enjoined silence in cases of resurrection from the dead, and of restoration of sight to the blind. We find the latter in verse 30, because other diseases might appear to be curable; but everyone knows that if life or sight are lost, no art can ever restore them. Christ did not say absolutely to the leper when he was cleansed (viii. 4), "tell no man," but "not before you have shown yourself to the priests". He knew that, whatever His commands, the miracle could not be concealed; but that that would take place which the evangelist has described (verse 26).

Why, then, did He give this command? That He might do what in Him lay (*quod in se erat*). He knew that Judas would betray Him; why did He choose him? He knew that men would not keep His commandments; why did He institute them? He knew that Adam would fall; why did He create him? There are questions without number of the like kind. But if it were not expedient that the miracle should be divulged, and He yet knew that it would be, why did He perform it? Because the ill-will of the Pharisees ought not to defraud the ruler of his daughter's resurrection.

Verse 26. *And the fame thereof went abroad.*

The Evangelist says that this was for the proof of the miracle, that no one might pretend that Christ had feigned it. The whole region was a witness of it; for this is the meaning of the Greek ὅλη γὴ ἐκείνη—the whole region,

the entire province. S. Mark (v. 42) says, with the same design, that all the people were "astonished with a great astonishment"; and both S. Mark and S. Luke relate that Christ said, "Give her to eat," to show that she was not a phantom, but truly raised; as Christ Himself, to show that He had truly risen, ate and drank with the disciples (*S. Luke* xxiv. 41; *S. John* xxi. 5; *Acts* x. 41).

Verse 28. *And when He was come to the house.*

Why did not Christ heal these blind men by the way? S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact answer, That He might heal them more secretly and teach them that He did not look for glory. Others, more rightly, as it may be thought, say it was that He might prove their faith; for it is probable that Christ, in the beginning, knew that their faith was not sufficiently perfect, and wished, with time and patience, to mature it. Nor is this to be wondered at; for they were blind, and the miracles which Christ did they could only hear and not see. But this is the true faith, as SS. Gregory and Augustin say, "to believe what we do not see," for "blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed" (*S. John* xx. 29). They who would be believers must be blind before they believe, believing they will see.

Verse 30. *Their eyes were opened.*

That is, they saw; for their eyes had been opened before, but they were said to be shut as regards the result, because they saw no more than if they had been wholly closed. The Hebrews are accustomed to speak thus (*Isa.* xxxv. 5; xlii. 6, 7; so *infra*, xx. 33; *S. Luke* xxiv. 31; *S. John* ix. 10, 14, 21, 26, 30, 32; x. 21). The eyes are sometimes said to be opened when they were not only not shut before, but were not blind, but they did not see what they saw afterwards; as the eyes of our first parents are said to have been

opened when they ate the forbidden fruit: for they saw then that they were naked, which they did not see before (*Gen.* iii. 4). In the same sense ears are said to be opened (*S. Mark* vii. 35). Why Christ so commanded these blind men has been said on verse 25. S. Jerome, Bede, S. Gregory (lib. xix., *Moral*, chap. 14), ascribe it to Christ's humility and modesty. S. Hilary says that it was the duty of the Apostles to relate the miracles of Christ, which other men ought not to take it upon themselves to do.

Verse 31. *But they going out spread His fame.*

They published the fame of Christ and of the miracles He had performed, in the true sense of the word, and the corresponding Greek one διεφήμησεν; although among Latin authors, perhaps from the paucity of their numbers, the word *diffamo* is very rarely found but as used in a bad sense. Our version evidently employs it in a good one.

Some have asked whether the blind men sinned who published their cure against the command of Christ. The Ancients justly excuse them, because they acted not so much from disobedience as from gratitude (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxxiii.; S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact). They also probably thought that Christ enjoined silence on them from modesty, and not seriously; and this is not to be wondered at, as so many learned men (S. Jerome, S. Gregory, Bede) thought the same.

Verse 32. *Behold they brought Him.*

It may appear doubtful whether this is the same history as that related by S. Luke (xi. 14). Some think it a different one, because it seems put by S. Luke (xi.) in another place; but it is much more likely that both Evangelists describe one and the same event. In each the devil is dumb. In each when he was cast out the multitudes wondered. In each the Pharisees said, "He

casts out devils by the prince of the devils". All these things could hardly happen and come together in different miracles. But S. Luke does not preserve the order of events, for S. Matthew says plainly that this miracle happened immediately after the healing of the two blind men. S. Luke does not assert this, but he does not deny it.

A dumb man.

The word κώφος, as S. Jerome says, more frequently signifies deaf than dumb, as in *S. Mark* vii. 32. But it also sometimes means dumb, as in this instance; for we find, in verse 33, "the dumb spoke" (κώφος), as in xii. 22 and *S. Luke* xi. 14. Some have said that the word dumb can here be applied either to the devil or to the man; but there is no ambiguity in the Greek, which allows the application only to the man. In *S. Luke* xi. 14, they brought to Him a dumb devil. This has given occasion to discussions as to what devils were dumb. For some are called dumb, as above, and others μογιλάλοι, that is, speaking with difficulty (*S. Mark* viii. 32), and lunatics (*S. Matt.* xvii. 15). The question is, in what sense some devils are called dumb, and whether all are so, and whether all are so when they choose. Some say that they are called dumb as being so by nature; others, because they inhabit in many men who are dumb; others, again—and this seems more likely—because they make men dumb. I believe that not all the devils are sometimes dumb; but as some delight in lust, others in avarice, others in other ways of tormenting men, so there are some who love to make the men in whom they dwell dumb. Others, says S. Jerome, observe the changes of the moon, to vex and dishonour God's creatures. I conclude this from xvii. 19 and *S. Mark* ix. 28. This kind, says Christ, "is not cast out but by prayer and fasting," as if He attributed this tenacity to their nature.

Verse 33. *And after the devil was cast out.*

Christ did not require a confession of faith from the possessed, as from the blind, because he was dumb. Deaf men are often apt to be without speech, so as to be unable to hear or to speak.

Verse 34. *But the Pharisees.*

Christ opposes the Pharisees who did not believe, but murmured and blasphemed, to the believing and wondering multitude (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxiii.).

By the prince of devils.

As if Christ were one of the devils, and the minister of the devil, and were actuated by demoniacal power. They called Him so from an infamous idol (*S. Luke* xi. 15), as shall be explained on that passage. It was, as S. Chrysostom says, the most utter blindness. "For invidiousness makes men so blind that they perceive not what they say." How was Satan able to cast out Satan? as Christ urges upon the Pharisees (xii. 26; *S. Mark* iii. 23; *S. Luke* xi. 18).

Verse 37. *The harvest indeed is great.*

This, in many ancient copies, even in Strabo, Hugo, and N. de Lyra, is the beginning of the tenth chapter, and not without reason, for the sense of what follows depends upon this.

The cause of the mission of the Apostles treated of in chap. x. is given here. They were sent because the harvest was great and the labourers were few. Christ calls the multitude who came to hear the Word of God the harvest. The Sower—that is, Christ—went out to sow His own seed. The seed had increased abundantly, the crop was ripe for the harvest, and He does not speak of the seed or the corn, but of the harvest (*S. Luke* x. 2; *S. John* iv. 35; S. Chrysostom; Euthymius).

Verse 38. *The Lord of the harvest.*

By the Lord of the harvest S. Chrysostom and Euthymius understand Christ Himself. He is, indeed, truly the Lord; but it is more probable that He called His Father such, as He says (*S. John* xv. 1): "I am the True Vine, My Father is the Husbandman". He makes His Father also, and not Himself, the Lord of the Vineyard (xxi. 33, 38; *S. Luke* xx. 9). He signifies that He is the Son of the Father of the house who sows and reaps for His Father, and whom the Father, when He had sent many servants to receive the fruits from the husbandmen, and they had dismissed some with contumely, and had stoned others, sent last of all, saying: "It may be they will reverence My Son".

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST SENDS OUT HIS TWELVE APOSTLES WITH THE POWER OF MIRACLES. THE LESSONS HE GIVES THEM.

Verse 1. *And having called His twelve disciples together.*

BEFORE this time they were called disciples, not Apostles. Although Christ had many more, these were called the disciples, and the Twelve, both because they were united in closer union with Christ, and because they were marked out for the office of Apostles. Christ now makes them Apostles, that is, the sent, by sending them: as if from disciples He made them masters. He sent also seventy-two others (*S. Luke* x. 1), because they were to be sent afterwards throughout the entire world (xxviii. 19; *S. Mark* xvi. 15). Although the ancient Fathers, from the force of the word, sometimes called the seventy-two Apostles (S. Irenæus, ii. 37; Tertullian, v.; Marcion, iv.). He had said: "The harvest indeed is great"; and He now sends forth labourers into it, prepared as it had been by His teaching, and, as it were, made ripe (*S. John* iv. 35). For by His preaching and miracles He had moved the minds of all men to be turned to Him as in a moment. This is His meaning in *S. John* iv. 38.

Christ's having sent neither more nor fewer than twelve was certainly not by chance, but by design and mystery (*Acts* i. 16). It was, as it were, necessary that the number twelve should be kept complete, so S. Matthias was chosen into the place of the traitor Judas. From *Apoc.* iv. 4 it is clear that by the twenty-four Elders, the twelve Apostles

and the twelve Patriarchs are to be understood. Christ ordered it that the Apostles should be in number twelve to fill up the room of the Patriarchs. As the whole Jewish nation was descended from the twelve Patriarchs according to the flesh, so the whole people of Christ came spiritually of the twelve Apostles; for Christ had come to change flesh into Spirit. That the Apostles were the fathers of those who believed through them, we have the testimony of S. Paul (*1 Cor.* iv. 15; *Philemon* x.).

All ancient authorities acknowledge the mystery of numbers (S. Irenæus, iv. 38). Many authors have enumerated other instances of the number twelve (S. Justin, *De Veritat. Christ.;* Tertullian, iv., *Cont. Marcion;* S. Jerome, *Comment.;* on this passage, and many others, Theodoret, *Quest.* 1 *on Joshua;* Theophylact, *in loc.*). I will only produce the words of Tertullian: "Why," he says, "did Christ choose twelve Apostles, and no more or no less? I might show, even from this, that He is to be interpreted, not only by the voices of the prophets, but by the proof of facts. For I find the figures of this number with the Creator. There were twelve wells in Elim, and twelve stones set up by Joshua at Jordan, and preserved in the Ark of the Covenant. Twelve Apostles were sent, like fountains, to water the whole world, that was dry and parched, and devoid of knowledge." Others elegantly compare the twelve Apostles to the twelve months of the year, and the four Evangelists to the four seasons (S. Jerome, *On Ezek.* i., and the poet Sedulius).

"Quatuor hi proceres una te voce canentes,
Tempora ceu totidem latum sparguntur in orbem.
Sic et Apostolici semper duodenus honoris,
Fulget apex numero, menses imitatus et horas,
Omnibus ut rebus, semper tibi militet annus."

Like the seasons four that gladden
All the wide world by their rays,
Four Evangelists are singing
With one voice, O Lord, Thy praise.

And, like months and hours in number,
Lo the twelve who reach'd the height
Of the Apostolic honour
Sending through the earth Thy light.

They the hours, and months, and seasons
Imitating in their flight,
Thus fulfil the year, and always,
And in all things, for Thee fight.

S. Jerome on this passage, and S. Augustine (i. 4, *De Felice Manich.*), say that Christ chose the Apostles with this certain and notable number that no one might surreptitiously creep into the apostolic band.

And He gave them power over unclean spirits.

Some Greek copies have the words *κατὰ τῶν πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων—contra immundos spiritus.* It may be suspected that the words were originally a marginal addition, and have thence crept into the text. Our version certainly does not contain them. The Evangelist calls them "unclean," not that they are so *per se*, but that they delight in things unclean, and most especially incite men to such (xii. 43; *S. Mark* i. 23, 26, 27; iii. 11, 30; v. 2, 8, 13; vi. 7; vii. 25; ix. 25), and almost everywhere else where mention is made of them.

Christ instructed the Apostles in doctrine (v., vii., viii.). He instructs them now, when they are to be sent out with power. This power was above all things necessary to them. For how could men without culture convince others on subjects so great and almost beyond belief, without miracles? It was right that as Moses, the first teacher of the old Law, had been endowed with extensive powers of working miracles, so the Apostles, as teaching an evangelical, that is, a better Law, should be gifted with others equal or still greater.

Verse 2. *And the names of the twelve Apostles are these.*

The Evangelist recounted the names of the Apostles, that

no one might pass himself off as one, as S. Jerome, S. Augustin (i. 4, *Cont. Felix*), and Euthymius say; nor was it fitting that Christians should be ignorant of the names of those through whom they were begotten.

The first Peter.

What is the meaning of the word "first" in this passage, that all the Evangelists—S. Matthew, S. Mark (iii. 16), S. Luke (vi. 14)—put S. Peter in the first place? If it mean that he was the first called, why do none of them rank his brother Andrew before him? for Andrew brought him to Christ, and was the first of the two to follow Christ (*S. John* i. 40, 41). Why do all name Judas the traitor last, but because he was the most worthless of all? Why should we say that the Evangelists observed this order in the last, whom they yet do not call the last, and deny that they keep it with regard to Peter, whom they both number first and style the first? Again, as they name Peter first, why do they not name the others as second, third, fourth, and so on, except that they call him first, not because it occurred to them to mention him as such, but because he was first in dignity and authority, and the word signified not his number but his primacy? For if this were a numeral noun, all the other numerals which follow would have been given. Why, in naming the other Apostles, do all the Evangelists preserve the same order, except on a few points, on which, as will shortly be shown, they vary from necessity?—a very strong argument that the Evangelists, as far as possible, wished to keep the order of rank. It is objected—

1. That when SS. Matthew and Luke place Andrew after Peter, S. Mark puts John and James before Andrew. S. Mark did this from necessity, as wishing to mention those on whom Christ bestowed a change of name. He placed, therefore, SS. James and John between SS. Peter

and Andrew by parenthesis. Thus he joined Andrew with Peter, showing that, although he was in the fourth place, he came next to Peter. It is clear that it was so, because, when S. Mark and the other Evangelists named all the Apostles as they were sent, they mentioned them two by two; and unless Andrew had been mentioned with Peter, one of the two would have had no companion.

2. It is next objected, that S. Matthew puts Philip and Bartholomew before James and John, the other Evangelists after them. Even in S. Matthew, not only in all Greek copies, but also in all ancient and corrected Latin ones, they are put after, as in S. Jerome and Bede.

3. The third objection is, that the other Evangelists put Matthew before Thomas, but Matthew puts himself after him. This, however, very strongly confirms the supposition that the Evangelists took account of the rank of each Apostle. For why does S. Matthew put himself after, while the others put him before, Thomas, except that S. Matthew would not put himself first from modesty? If they were not enumerated from rank, it would have made no difference in what place anyone were named, and it would neither have been any modesty in S. Matthew to put himself after S. Thomas, nor immodesty if he had ranked himself before him.

It is urged that S. Paul (*Galat.* ii. 9) puts James before Peter. S. Paul was taking account, not of rank, but of age, in placing James before Peter. It was S. Paul's object in that Epistle to prove himself the equal of the other Apostles, and it was not opportune to speak of the prerogatives of each. Hence, S. Paul did not say James, and Cephas, and John, who were pillars, when he might have done so, for we see that Christ always preferred these three Apostles to the rest, but he said "who seemed to be pillars".

Who is called Peter.

Simon, surnamed Peter, for Christ had given him that name (xvi. 18; *S. John* i. 42). It is added here to distinguish him from Simon the Canaanite (verse 4).

Verse 3. *James the son of Zebedee.*

He was called "the Less" (*S. Mark* xv. 40), because he was younger; and the brother of the Lord (*Galat.* i. 19), because he was the son of Mary, the sister of Mary, the mother of the Lord, as S. Jerome in his *Life* thinks; and "the Just," because of his singular holiness. He was the author of the Catholic Epistle (*S. James* i. 1), and first Bishop of Jerusalem (S. Jerome, *De Scriptor.*).

Thomas.

He who did not believe in Christ's Resurrection, and who is called Didymus (*S. John* xx. 24).

And Thaddæus.

S. Jerome says that he had three names. For he is called Thaddæus here, and Judas, the brother of James (*Jude* i.), and Labbæus, that is, *corculum*, "litttle heart," a term of affection, or, as some say, he had the letters of the name of God, יהודה in his own name. It is described as a Jewish custom, that, whoever had in his name the four letters of the name of God, יהודה should be called by another name, as יהודה Judas, but that they who were named Judas should be called Lions, because Judah, the first of the Patriarchs, was so called (*Gen.* xlix. 9).

Verse 4. *Simon the Cananean.*

He was, says S. Jerome, of Cana of Galilee. Some think that He should rather be called Canæan, for the town of Galilee was called Cana, and not Canaan. This name Canæan would not be derived from the town but from

his zeal; that is, he was called Zelotes, as in *S. Luke* vi. 15; *Acts* i. 13. קנאה in Hebrew signifies zeal; so that for the Greek *κανανίτης* we should read *κανίτης*. On the other hand, if the word is zeal, and not the town, it would not have the form of Gentile names in Greek. It may rather be supposed therefore that because he was of the town of Cana or Canaan he was called either Canean or Cananean, and from his fervency and zeal Zelotes, in allusion to the meaning of the name of the place.

Judas Iscariot.

Many follow S. Jerome, and say that his name was derived from the tribe of Isachar, as if he were called Isachariot. Against this is the fact that he would then have been called, not Iscariot, but Isachariot. Others read his name איש קריות the man of Carioth, a town in the tribe of Judah (*Joshua* xv. 25).

Verse 5. *Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles.*

"To the Gentiles" is a Hebrew expression בדרך הגוים (*Jer.* ii. 18); that is, Why goest thou so frequently into Egypt? It is a common question why Christ did not send the Apostles to the Gentiles now as He did so soon afterwards (xxviii. 19; *S. Mark* xvi. 15). The ordinary and true reply is that the Jews were the sons of the kingdom (viii. 12), and to them was given the promise of the kingdom (*Gen.* xvii. 1, 2; *Rom.* xv. 8); and Christ had not come but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that is, to them firstly (xv. 24). It was fit therefore that the Word of God should be preached to them first (*Acts* xiii. 46). Other authors give other reasons: "that the Jews might not have any excuse if they rejected Christ in saying that He had sent His Apostles to the Gentiles and their enemies". S. Jerome, S. Augustin (*Quest. 77 on Old and New Tests.*), Bede, Strabus, Theophylact, S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxiii.), and

Euthymius say that Christ did this to show that He had forgotten the wrongs suffered by Him at the hands of the Jews.

And into the cities.

Christ distinguishes the Samaritans both from Jews and Gentiles, because they were properly neither Jews nor Gentiles; for the twelve tribes which were led away into Chaldæa did not return, but only two, Judah and Benjamin (1 *Esdras* i. 5), to whom alone a promise had been made of a return (*Jer.* xxv. 12). But in place of the Samaritans, that is, of the ten tribes, the king of Assyria sent colonies of Chaldeans to inhabit all the deserted land; and, when lions devoured the inhabitants, the king commanded a Hebrew priest to be sent to teach them to worship God according to the rites of the Jews, and to avert the wrath of the lions. When this was done they worshipped both their own idols in their own manner, and the God of Israel from fear of the lions (4 *Kings* xvii. 24). They were therefore neither Jews nor Gentiles; but they wished to be thought Jews (*S. John* iv. 9), and therefore Christ forbade the Apostles to go to them.

Verse 6. *But go ye rather to the lost sheep.*

Christ calls them sheep, because they were the peculiar people of God, and, as it were, His flock, which, both by Himself and by His kings and prophets, He was said to feed (*Psalms* lxxiii. 1; lxxvi. 21; lxxvii. 52, 70, 71; lxxviii. 31; lxxix. 1).

Lost.

(*Psalms* xiii. 3, lii. 4; *Isaiah* liii. 6; *Ezek.* xxxiv. 5.)

Verse 7. *Is at hand.*

(*Vid.* chap. iii. 2.)

Verse 8. *Heal the sick.*

He teaches them that as they had had the power of

miracles given to them so lately, they should use it freely and liberally, for He knew, as S. Jerome says, that countrymen would gain more faith from miracles than mere words; as if He had said, "Spare not your miracles; do them as often as you think necessary or useful for the persuasion of the people".

Freely have you received, freely give.

Christ appears in these words to remove, not only all occasions of boasting, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact think, and of simony and avarice, as others say, but also to prove what He had taught in His last words, that the Apostles ought to use freely their gift of miracles; for what we receive freely, and what we give freely, we give largely and plentifully.

Verse 9. *Do not possess gold.*

I cannot agree with those who say that this prohibition was not universal, but applied only to this first mission of the Apostles, as if Christ wished by this prelude, as it were, to make trial of their patience, and that they might gain experience of Divine Providence. All ancient and trustworthy authors hold this to have been a command of perpetual obligation, and that it applies not only to this mission but to all missions, and, in a word, to the entire Apostolic office (S. Hilary; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxxiii.; S. Ambrose, ix., *On S. Luke*; S. Jerome; S. Augustin, ii. 30, *De Consens.*).

Who does not see that Christ allowed the Apostles to have no money, lest anxiety for that, and for the other necessaries of life, should be a hindrance to their Apostolic office? for it was not good for them to leave the Word of God and to serve tables (*Acts* vi. 2), and how much less to give anxious thought to their food and clothing. This prohibition has a force, not less in the second mission than

in the first; nay, rather a much greater one. For this first mission was only, as it were, a kind of skirmish and excursion into Judæa alone; the second was, as it were, a formal combat in which all their forces must be got together for the conquest of the whole world, and in which the soldiers must be especially free from all incumbrance.

Who does not see that Christ designed in this first mission to train the Apostles for their second? If, in a mock fight, He would have them abstain from gold, how much more in serious war? "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want anything?" (*S. Luke* xxii. 36). The same is to be understood by what has gone before and by what follows. "Freely have you received," that is, do not sell your gift under pretence of seeking food and clothing; for I will that you have neither gold nor silver. These words apply not only to this first mission, but much more to the second. For in this more miracles were to be done, and they would have more occasion and need to sell their gifts than among the Jews. Besides the reason given in verse 10 why they ought to have neither gold nor silver, nor any other thing—viz., the workman is worthy of his meat—applies not less to the second mission than to the first; and, therefore, so does that which follows from it, that they may have neither silver nor gold. Nay, the words of verse 16 are spoken either exclusively or most especially of the second mission. For in the first they had experience of no wolves, but returned glorifying God that the devils were subject to them through the name of Christ (*S. Luke* x. 17).

Nor money.

οὐδὲ χάλκον, *nec æs*; that is, nor any other kind of money, for all money is made of gold, silver, or brass.

In your purses.

In their purses, which they carried in their girdles.

Verse 10. *Nor scrip.*

For carrying bread and other food. S. Jerome calls it *citarchium* or *cistartum* (1 *Kings* ix. 7). The Latins call it *sportula*, of which Tertullian makes mention. By scrip is understood what is carried in it—by *continens* is understood *contentum.*

Nor two coats.

Christ did not forbid two garments at once if cold or need required them, but the possession of more than is required for present use, as they who are wealthy have, and such as take care for such things. These have one garment for present wear, and another for the future, as S. Jerome has observed; as is referred to by S. Luke (iii. 11). It is clear that Christ Himself wore two coats at once (*S. John* xix. 23). In the same way the words of S. Mark (vi. 9) are to be understood—that they should not have two coats, which they could put on at different times.

Nor shoes.

Did Christ then wish the Apostles to go wholly unshod? Some think that He did not forbid every kind of shoe, but only such as covered the whole foot, and which are properly termed ὑποδήματα, *calcei;* and S. Mark (vi. 9) says, "To be shod with sandals"; as if sandals covered only the sole of the foot, and were allowed, but shoes were forbidden. S. Jerome (*in loc.*) and S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 30) so explain it. They seem to be supported by S. Luke (xxii. 35). But it can scarcely be thought that Christ distinguished so nicely between shoes and sandals. For as S. Matthew says that Christ forbade even a staff, and S. Mark says that He allowed it, so when he says that Christ allowed sandals, he meant what S. Matthew calls shoes, and it appears from *Acts* xii. 8 that shoes and sandals were the same things.

In what sense, then, does S. Matthew say that Christ forbade them, and S. Mark say that He allowed them? Some say that S. Matthew's prohibition referred to the possession of two pairs at once, as He said two coats, and as the poet Juvencus formerly explained it:

> "Nec plantis tegmina bina"—
> "Nor for the foot two coverings".

S. Matthew and S. Mark use apparently contradictory terms. S. Matthew signifies that Christ forbade the Apostles, as if anxious for the future, to take two or more pairs of shoes, and S. Mark that He commanded them to take the shoes they then had on, and no more.

There is a similar question as regards the staff. S. Matthew says that Christ forbade the staff; S. Mark that He allowed it. They use different words to express with elegance the same meaning. For each, expressing not the words, but the meaning, of Christ, intended to teach us that He forbade the Apostles to have anything beyond what was required for present use. S. Matthew signifies this by saying, "Nor staff," for even the very poorest man has his staff. S. Mark signifies it by the words, "A staff only". For whoever has only a staff has nothing superfluous, as Jacob said (*Gen.* xxxii. 10): "With my staff I passed over this Jordan," that is, "I was poor and had nothing but my staff in my hand".

Verse 11. *Enquire who in it is worthy.*

S. Jerome explains these words to mean: "Who is worthy of receiving benefits from you, that you may take up your abode with him"; as if in this the Apostles were the givers of the gift, and not the receivers. Others, Who is most fit to have the Gospel preached to him; others, Who is of good life and hospitable: all come to the same point.

And there abide till you go thence.

Do not change your lodging, or, as S. Luke puts it more clearly, "Remove not from house to house". Why Christ gave this direction has been a much ventilated question.

Three reasons have been given for it:

1. That the Apostles might not appear light and changeable.

2. That they should not be fastidious and discontented with what was set before them in their first lodging, and seek better accommodation (S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact).

3. That they might not offend their former host, by leaving him as if he were unworthy or grudging.

Verse 12. *Saying, Peace be to this house.*

These words are not read in the Greek, but they ought to be, as is clear from verse 13. They are read in *S. Luke* x. 5, and by SS. Hilary, Chrysostom, Jerome (*in Comment.*), and Theophylact. They are not found in the text through the unpardonable negligence, apparently, of the typographers. Euthymius, however, does not read the words. It is the usual salutation of the Hebrews, as S. Jerome says.

שלום לך *pax tecum.* The words show the peaceful visit of the person saluting—as *Gen.* xliii. 23; *Judges* vi. 23. They sometimes invoked all good things on those whom they saluted, as in 1 *Paralip.* xii. 18. It is probable that Christ desired the Apostles to do both, to signify that wherever they came they brought peace, and not strife, and that they prayed for every kind of good thing on those who received them. This we gather from verse 13.

Verse 13. *And if the house be worthy.*

To receive your peace. S. Luke (x. 6) speaks of "the Son of peace," that is, if your host be a lover of peace or

worthy of peace: as one worthy of death is called a son of death.

Your peace shall come upon it.

All the good things you have prayed for in the name of peace shall come upon it.

But if it be not worthy your peace shall return unto you.

The Greek reads the verb in the passive, "shall be returned". Euthymius and some others understand that Christ commanded them to recall, as far as they could, the peace they had offered and go elsewhere; but it does not seem in harmony with the lovingkindness of Christ to command the Apostles to take back a peace they had given: for this would be equivalent to their praying a second time that the good things for which they had prayed might not be sent. Those Fathers appear to explain it better who say that the imperative mood is put, by a Hebrew idiom, for the future, as appears from S. Luke (x. 6), who uses this tense. Hence our version, careless of the word, follows the meaning.

The sense of the passage, however, may be double:

1. Either it shall be returned to you, that is, that for which you have prayed, as in *Ps.* xxxiv. 13, that is, "I wish that to come to myself which I have entreated for my enemies"; or,

2. The future, on the other hand, is put for the imperative; or, as is perhaps more probable, Christ did not mean that what the Apostles had prayed for should come upon themselves, but that it should not come to those for whom they prayed. So spoke the Hebrews: "My word shall not return to me void" (*Isa.* lv. 11). "Shall return" is, therefore, not to take effect.

Verse 14. *Shake off the dust.*

Why did Christ command what appears a sign of impatience and anger? Many reasons have been given by

the Ancients. S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Theophylact, S. Augustin (*Quest. 7 on S. Matthew*), say that it was to show that the Apostles would have nothing in common with them, since they left even their very dust. The same authors and Bede say that this was done to show that the Apostles had taken so long a journey for them to no purpose. For dust on the feet means a long journey. S. Ambrose (ix., *On S. Luke*) and Euthymius (on this passage) say that it was to show that even their dust was wicked, and that they would therefore have none of it. S. Hilary suggests that the Apostles were ordered to do this as a sign of an anathema. The true reason probably is one given by him and Origen (*Hom. on Gen.* xviii.). It was to show that the very dust itself which they had collected in their journey should rise up as a testimony against them, as a testimony in the day of judgment, because they would not receive them. For it was the custom of the Jews to make a memorial in commemoration of a great and notable action. Whether it were to erect a heap of stones (as *Gen.* xxxi. 46), or an altar (as *Josh.* xxii. 26), or to rend their clothes (as in *S. Matt.* xxvi. 65). So the Romans, in ratifying a treaty, sacrificed a pig (*feriebant*), whence they call to make and conclude a treaty "to slay and strike" (*ferire*) a treaty.

Verse 15. *It shall be more tolerable.*

Not, perhaps, that the men of Sodom and Gomorrha had not greater sins, nor that the only question here was of the sin of inhospitality alone, as Remigius and De Lyra think, nor that they had now expiated some part of their sin by burning, as Anastasius (*Quest.* 8 *on Script.*) supposes, but because the Gospel had not been preached to them, as SS. Hilary and Jerome, Bede, and Theophylact conclude, and as may be inferred from chap. xi. 23, 24. Two doctrines have been deduced from this passage. 1. By S. Jerome: That the punishments of all the condemned

are not equal. 2. By Anastasius: That some are punished, not only in this life, but also in the life to come. For the men of Sodom were punished by the burning of their city, and Christ still signifies that they will be further punished at the day of judgment.

Verse 16. *Behold I send you.*

Christ here fortifies the Apostles against future perils. They who think that these words were not spoken to the Apostles in their first mission are in error (*S. Luke* x. 3): where the same words are related to have been spoken to the seventy-two in their first mission, as has been remarked by S. Chrysostom, and observed on verse 9 above. Although all these things were not necessary for the first mission, yet they were all spoken at that time, because the Apostles were taught, not for that occasion alone, but for all future ones. When Christ said, "Behold, I send you," &c., He added strength to His words, and courage to the disciples, as The Author (*Hom.* xxiv.), S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius have observed. It is as if He had said: "Behold, I send you who am able to deliver you from all dangers". Christ appears to allude to the ancient mission of the Prophets: "I who sent them send you also, I who delivered them when need was will deliver you also".

As sheep.

Christ seems to call them sheep, not only because they were innocent, and were the servants of God, as many explain it, but most especially because they were defenceless and deprived of all human safeguards. He appears to allude to His command (verse 9) not to take a scrip with them, as in *Ps.* xxxiii. 13; that is, they were so weak and so exposed to injury that whoever wished might slay them.

In the midst.

In medio, ἐν for *εἰς*, as in the Hebrew, ב for בתוך זאבים *in medio*, that is, among wolves. By these words Christ

means that the wolves were many in number and the sheep few. One wolf among many sheep works great destruction. What, then, when the wolves are more in number than the sheep? (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxxiv.). Christ calls all men who refuse the Gospel "wolves"; as in the verse following, "Beware of men," He means not only the Scribes and Pharisees, as S. Jerome explains it in too restricted a sense.

Be you therefore wise.

To guard against treacherous designs, as He explains on verse 23.

And simple as doves.

Harmless, sincere, giving no occasion of harming you, and not even avenging your wrongs. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxiv.) and The Author (*Hom.* xlii.) so explain it. So, too, S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xiv. 20; *Ephes.* v. 15, 16; *Coloss.* iv. 5).

Verse 17. *But beware of men.*

Christ means those who had before been called wolves. For man is a wolf to man. He does not call all men wolves, but only those who are of this world.

For they will deliver you up in councils.

Some understand by councils, Gentile tribunals, and by synagogues, the assemblies of Jews. Other suppose both to refer to the Gentiles, the synagogues being panegyres or popular assemblies. It might be better to refer both to the Jews, who had both their synagogues, or public assemblies of the whole people, where they who had deserved it were scourged, and their Sanhedrim, or council, where graver causes were decided (verse 22). For Christ speaks in the following verse of Gentile tribunals. (Euthymius; and see *Acts* iv. 6; v. 27; vi. 12; 2 *Cor.* xi. 24.)

Verse 18. *For a testimony.*

Some understand by this that the Apostles should bear testimony to Christ by constant and patient suffering; for the heathen would then see that that for which they were prepared to die was not a vain thing. Hence, they who die for Christ and His Faith are called martyrs, that is, witnesses of Christ (*Acts* xxii. 20; *Apoc.* xvii. 6). Others think it is as if Christ had said that "You" (the Apostles) "may have a testimony against those who rejected them at the day of judgment; for that which would excuse you will accuse them". So S. Luke (xxi. 13), S. Hilary, The Author, Bede, Euthymius.

And to the Gentiles.

To the Jews and Gentiles. Christ spoke of the Jews when He said, "They shall deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in synagogues"; and of the Gentiles when He said, "You shall be brought before governors and before kings" — brought, that is, by the Jews. Their patience was to be a testimony against both. This is the true meaning of the passage which Theophylact and Euthymius alone seem to have understood.

Verse 19. *Take no thought.*

Christ does not teach the Apostles to be negligent and heartless, nor would He have them too timid and anxious. But He forbids them to be so. The Greek word μεριμνήσητε explains this—as *supra*, vi. 25, 28, 31, 34. In the same sense we understand *S. Matt.* xiii. 11 and *S. Luke* xxi. 14. He does not prohibit all previous carefulness on the subject, but only that which has its root in distrust in Divine Providence, and which impedes the free preaching of the Gospel by too great fear and anxiety.

For it shall be given you.

So *S. Luke* xxi. 15.

Verse 20. *For it is not you.*

It is not so much you as the spirit of your Father. You shall speak not in your own wisdom and design, but His, as chap. ix. 13: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice". That is, not so much sacrifice as mercy. The meaning is: "It is not so much your cause as Mine and My Father's who is in heaven; and therefore the Comforter — that is, My Advocate and My Father's, even if you be silent, will answer. So say The Author and S. Jerome.

Verse 23. *And when they shall persecute you.*

Christ had said, verse 10, "Be ye wise". He now teaches one part of wisdom by which the Apostles may escape the snares of their enemies and be on their guard against men, as He had warned them in verse 17. He would not have His soldiers fight, but fly.

Two questions have been raised on this passage:

1. Whether the above words were spoken on the first mission.

2. How Christ commands the Apostles to fly, when He says the contrary in *S. John* x. 11, 12.

Many great authorities think that the words apply to the first mission alone. Among these are Tertullian (*De Fug. Persecut.*), S. Jerome and S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxv.), Euthymius and Theophylact. Others refer them generally to every mission and to the whole Apostolic office, like the words in verse 9 (Origen, *Hom.* ix. *on Judges;* S. Athanasius, *Ad Orthod.* and *Ep. to Pope Marcus;* S. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.* i. *cont. Julian*). This appears much more probable. For in their first mission the Apostles experienced nothing to cause them to fly from one city to another; but all things succeeded well with them, and they returned rejoicing that the devils were subject to them (*S. Luke* x. 17). Christ could not be ignorant of this before it was done. It is therefore a general saying

spoken by Him on the occasion, but not from the needs, of the first mission. The former of the above-mentioned authors have given their attention, not to the result from which the warning of Christ was most especially to be understood, but only to the words that follow: "You shall not finish all the cities in Israel till the Son of man come".

The second question, how Christ taught the Apostles to flee, cannot be treated of more copiously or more lucidly than it has been by S. Augustin (*Ep.* clxxx. *to Honoratus*). But he has not decided whether Christ's words contain a precept or a counsel. S. Athanasius and S. Gregory Nazianzen think the words a precept, but they speak perhaps popularly. The words appear to be either a precept or a counsel, according to the different circumstances of place, time, persons, and events; but they were properly given by Christ most chiefly, for the first mission and great part of the second, as a precept, that the Apostles might reserve themselves for spreading the Gospel more widely; lest they should be exposed to death in their first contest. For it was not yet the time for them to die. They must first carry on a long warfare, and extend the boundaries of the kingdom of God far and wide. "The soldier who flies," says the Greek proverb, "will fight again." In this sense Christ Himself fled more than once. First, as an Infant into Egygt (ii. 14); then when the men of Nazareth endeavoured to throw Him down the rock (*S. Luke* iv. 30; *S. John* vii. 30). In like manner not only upon those who were Apostles then, but upon those who come after them, and upon all men in all circumstances, is this precept laid. For when the Gospel itself, for which we are not to fly, requires us to fly, we must fly. To fly then is not cowardice but duty: not to fly is not courage but obstinacy. For this reason S. Paul fled (*Acts* ix. 25; 2 *Cor.* xi. 33). The greater glory of God and good of the Church ought to be our rule: when either or both require us to fly, not to do so is

sin. In other circumstances we ought not to fly. Whether we may be able or not is another question, which alone S. Augustin has explained.

This is the sum of his teaching. 1. For a priest to fly when he is sought for individually by his enemies, and there are others who can give the sacraments, is lawful. 2. The same when all his sheep have been scattered and put to flight. 3. When he can do more good by flight than by remaining at his post. S. Chrysostom adds that it is lawful, and perhaps it is his duty, to fly, when, if he remain, his own faith may be endangered. "He does not deny Christ by flying," he says, "who flies that he may not deny"—otherwise it is not lawful—but he must remain and lay down his life for his sheep, which a hireling will not do (*S. John* x. 12, 13). The opinion of Tertullian, who thought it unlawful for any Christian ever to fly, has been justly condemned; and S. Jerome, in his *Life*, does not hesitate to say that his work on flight in persecution was written against the Church.

You shall not finish.

This cannot be understood unless we first understand to what Christ is directing His words. They seem to have been spoken to show that there would not be wanting cities in Israel in which the Gospel had not been heard, and in which, if not received in others, the Apostles could take refuge, and labour with greater results. But all do not understand the words, "You shall not finish," in the same sense. S. Hilary explains it to mean, "To bring men to the perfection of the faith and of Gospel virtue". S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxv.), Euthymius, and Theophylact, of passing through all the cities in their preaching. The opinion of S. Hilary seems the best from what follows. Christ desired to signify not only the multitude of cities, but also, by the way, the unbelief of the Jews, which would be so great that the

Apostles would be fully occupied in converting them until the Son of man should come.

Till the Son of man come.

Many think that by the coming of the Son of man in this passage is meant His help and comfort; for God is said to come to us when He enriches us. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius were the authors of this opinion. They confirm it from *S. Luke* x. 1, as if Christ had said: "I will be with you, and help you before you shall have preached the Gospel in all the cities of Judæa". Others, as Bede: "You will not finish the Resurrection before the Son of man shall rise again".* For Christ is said to come when, the enemy being overthrown, He begins to reign (xxvi. 29, and *S. John* xiv. 28). Others take it of the day of His coming to judgment, and think that all the Gentile cities as well are called the cities of Israel, which are to be converted before the day of judgment. So think Rupertus and De Lyra, and perhaps also S. Augustin. But this cannot be held in any sense; for it is not doubtful but that Christ spoke of those cities to which He was then sending the Apostles; but He did not send them except to the cities of Judæa (verses 5, 6). Some imagine the unbelief of the Jews to be remarked upon, and that it is meant that the Gentiles would come into the faith before the Jews, as S. Paul says (*Rom.* xi.). So S. Hilary, whose opinion seems the more admissible, because there is nothing forced in it, and because there is no mention of any other coming of the Son of man, as it seems, than the supreme one in which He will come to judgment; although the explanation of Bede is not to be despised. What follows (verses 24, 25) has been understood in three ways:

1. That the words apply to all disciples and all servants;

* So the Fol.: the 8vo reads: "You will not bring all the Jews to belief by your preaching before the Son of man rise again".

but not as what always, but only as what most commonly, is the case: for most commonly the master is greater than the disciple, the lord than the servant; although the contrary is the case sometimes. So S. Chrysostom, The Author, and Euthymius.

2. That it is to be taken of all, but is to be understood to be true only as long as the disciple is the disciple, and the servant the servant; for then the disciple cannot be greater than the master, nor the servant than the lord. So say the same authors, and Theophylact, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Leontius.

3. That it is spoken of the disciples of Christ alone, who never can equal their Master: men and God; and who, even when made masters and teachers of the Gospel, were both called and were, in fact, still the disciples of Christ, because whatever they taught they received from Him, as the same Leontius says. But Christ does not seem so much to teach what disciples and servants generally are, as how they ought to conduct themselves to their master and lord; namely, so as not to think themselves better than he. For thus it best applies to the matter in hand, and thus S. Hilary seems to take it.

Verse 25. *If the good man of the house.*

That is, I, who am the ruler of the Church and its Lord.

Beelzebub.

Beelzebub was the notable idol of the Akronites (4 *Kings* i. 2, 3, 6-16). Beelzebub—that is, the lord of flies—is so called, either, as most think, because he was covered with flies from the blood of his victims, or, as seems more probable, because he was most chiefly invoked against the plague of flies. Pliny (x. 28) says: "The Egyptians invoke their Ibis against the invasion of serpents, and the Elæans the god Myagrus against the multitude of flies, which bring a

pestilence". Hence, from the horror and abomination of the thing, the devil is called Beelzebub by the Jews; as hell is called Gehenna from the place where they sacrificed infants to Moloch, as verse 28.

Verse 26. *Nothing is covered which shall not be revealed.*

When? SS. Hilary, Jerome, and Bede say in the day of judgment (1 *Cor.* iv. 5). Others, in the course of time, and even in this life, as Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxv.), The Author (*Hom.* xxv.), Theophylact, Euthymius, which appears to be the true meaning. Because Christ wished, as He had foretold many dreadful things, to add also some comfort. "Fear not;" that is, although men persecute you at first, and all call you Beelzebub and seducers, your virtue shall be known, and they who a little before injured you shall honour you.

Verse 27. *That which I tell you in darkness.*

In private.

Speak ye in the light.

In public. The Latins have a like idiom: "*Versari in oculis et luce hominum*".

And that which you hear in the ear.

Secretly, in the dark, is privately, and so in the ear.

Preach ye.

On the house-tops, with a clear voice, that all may hear (iv. 5). Christ therefore exhorts the disciples to preach the Gospel freely, confidently, boldly, and with a clear voice (*Isa.* xl. 9).

Verse 32. *Everyone therefore that shall confess Me.*

In Me. "In" is for the Hebrew article of the accusative, used in imitation by the LXX., as has been before

observed. Unless, perhaps, it be another Hebraism, and the word "confess" is put for the Hebrew Hithpael, הִתְוַדָּה which properly means, not merely to confess, but also to confess openly and, in a manner, with pride; as if Christ should say, in Latin, "Whoever glories in Me before men, I will glory in him before My Father". He equals Himself to men. He opposes men to God. He says, "Before My Father"; but it is the Father's prerogative to give to each his own, and the place of honour (xx. 23). Although the future Judge, He makes Himself, as it were, a witness who without His Father's will and foreknowledge will not give sentence.

Verse 34. *Do not think.*

These words agree with the preceding thus. Christ had foretold many calamities as about to happen to the preachers of the Gospel; and He now teaches that He had, in a manner, come that they might happen; that is, that they would not happen without His foreknowledge; so that when they did take place the disciples ought not to be dismayed (as *S. John* xvi. 4).

Two things are to be observed to the actual understanding of the passage: 1. That Christ speaks of peace and war, not of His own opinion, but from that of men who consider peace to be concord in misfortune. To be able to buy and sell freely, to consort together, to serve all vices freely, is the peace of the world. Such was the peace by which proud men consorted to build the Tower of Babel (*Gen.* xi. 4). Such was the peace by which Herod and Pilate, who had previously been enemies, became friends, and united to persecute Christ (*Luke* xxiii. 12). Such was the peace of the wicked described in *Ps.* ii. 1. This peace was not that which Christ came to send into the world, but the peace of God which passeth understanding (*Phil.* iv. 7). This peace the Prophets had fore-

told that Christ should bring (*Isa.* ix. 6, 7; xi. 6; lxv. 25). This peace when Christ was born was announced by the angels to men (*S. Luke* ii. 14). This, and not the former, was the peace which Christ said that He came to give (*S. John* xiv. 27). This peace He taught the Apostles to pray for wherever they went (*supra*, verse 12; S. Jerome; Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxxvi.; The Author, *Hom.* xxvi.; S. Gregory, *Pastor.*, iii. 23; Bede; and Theophylact, *in hoc. loc.*).

2. The other is that Christ did not say that He was come to raise this war and other calamities between parents and children; but that these would so follow from His coming, as if He had come to cause them, as in *S. John* ix. 39, and as it was said by Simeon that He is set (*S. Luke* ii. 34).

But the sword.

Many explain this of the Word of God (*Eph.* vi. 17; *Heb.* iv. 12). So, too, S. Hilary, The Author (*Hom.* xxvi), S. Augustin (*Quæst.* 3 *in Matt.*), and Theophylact. Others, as Euthymius, say that the love of God is meant, for which children are separated from their parents. The former is certainly the true view. The Evangelist says "the sword" rather than "war," as S. Chrysostom has observed, to add force to his words; for the head is severed from the body by a sword. S. Luke (xii. 51), for a sword, has separation; and xii. 49-51.

Verse 35. *A man at variance against his father.*

Christ speaks of the most intimate relationship, to show that there is no tie, however close, which the Gospel does not break.

Verse 36. *And a man's enemies.*

This verse is continued from verse 34. It fulfils the prophecy of Micheas (vii. 6), though spoken by him in a different sense.

Verse 38. *And he that taketh not up.*

He that taketh not the cross on his shoulders and carries it. The Evangelist puts λαμβάνει, "takes," for *αἴρει*, "lifts," as the Hebrews say, לקח "to take," instead of נשא *tollere*, "carry" (viii. 17). Christ alludes probably to the Cross which He Himself was to carry on His shoulders (*S. John* xix. 17). Christ says the same thing (xvi. 24), and S. Mark (viii. 34) on the same subject, and S. Luke (ix. 23) on a different one. Hence we see clearly how often Christ lays this on us. For to take up our cross is nothing else than to be ready to die for Christ, not only in any manner, but even on the cross; as Peter said (*S. Luke* xxii. 33), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxvi.), The Author (*Hom.* xxvi.), Theophylact. The explanation of S. Hilary and Euthymius, who think that to be called the cross of Christ, by which we ought to be dead to the world, as S. Paul said (*Gal.* vi. 14 and v. 24), is rather moral than literal.

Verse 39. *He that findeth his life.*

Christ speaks not of truth, but of the common opinion of men, who think themselves to have found their lives when they have saved them from any certain and present danger of death. Christ uses the word "life" in a double sense, as He does other ambiguous words, and not only without any fault, but with elegance and force—as chap. viii. 22. In the first clause He uses "life" for life from the Hebrew idiom; and in the second He uses "life" for the soul, which is either to be received into everlasting life or to be cast into everlasting fire.

Verse 40. *He that receiveth you.*

There is no difficulty in this place but that of understanding how Christ applies the words. S. Jerome and Euthymius think it to be the consolation which is

referred to in verse 9. For, because He had there said: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses," that they might not be anxious how they were to live among those unknown to them, He opens to them the houses of all, says Euthymius, saying that they should be received not less freely by all than if He Himself were present; for "Whoever receiveth you receiveth Me". This opinion would be correct if it had been said, not to the Apostles, but to those who were to receive them. But it was said to the Apostles.

Christ, then, appears to have said it for no other reason than to show the Apostles how great care He would have of them, since they represented His own Person.

Verse 41. *In the name of a prophet.*

Because he is a prophet—that is, one sent by Me—not because he is of My kindred; not because he is a Jew, or has any other name (The Author, S. Jerome, Chrysostom, Bede, Theophylact). He calls a teacher of the Law a prophet, for He was speaking of these.

The reward of a prophet.

Some take this of the reward which a prophet shall give to him who would teach him the Gospel; and the reward of a just man, that which the just man shall obtain by his prayers for him to God, or because for his sake God will give him to him—as *S. Luke* xvi. 9.

Others, but with a forced sense: The reward which I, who am a prophet and a righteous man, will give him. Others again: The reward of a prophet and just man—that is, that which is allotted to these by God, who receives prophets and righteous men. This is a probable explanation; but, doubtless, the meaning is: The reward of a prophet is that which the prophet himself shall receive, because while he receives a prophet, as such, it is with God

as if he discharged the duty of a prophet; as David said, 1 *Kings* xxx. 24. And as, on the other hand, S. Augustin used to say frequently that S. Paul, while he kept the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, stoned him by the hands of all; and as kings often punish equally both rebels and those who receive them into their houses or conceal them. S. Clement certainly takes it in this sense when, in his *Strom.* iv., he proves, from this passage, that the rewards of all the blessed will not be equal.

Verse 42. *To one of these little ones a cup of cold water only.*

Christ puts forth the most humble persons, and a thing of the very lowest value—a cup of water; and not of warm water, which could not be heated without the cost of fire, but of cold water, such as nature herself produces from the fountain.

His reward.

Wherever the modern heretics find this word, they endeavour in a wonderful manner to show that it does not mean reward, lest anyone should infer merits from reward. They say that eternal life is called reward, not because it is given because of our works, but because it is given after them (*non propter sed post*), as a reward is given after desert and labour. They seem to themselves completely to prove this when they say that the same thing cannot be both a reward and a heritage; for heritage is given, not to labour, but to birth, and eternal life is everywhere called a heritage. If we show that it is given us not only after (*post*) our works, but because of them (*propter*), their error will assuredly fall and perish from the foundation. But this is clear even from this very passage—to go no further. For, as S. Clement of Alexandria proves, Christ shows clearly that not he who receives a prophet and he who receives any just man shall receive the same reward, as neither shall the prophet and righteous man themselves. The

greater merit, therefore, answers to the greater, and the lesser to the less. What is the meaning of being given on account of merit if that is not? For if only the sequence (*consequentia*) of the latter and former is meant by the word reward, neither would the greater be paid to the greater labour, nor the less to the less; but only the earlier to the first in order, and the latter to the later. This is wholly at variance with the words of S. Paul (1 *Cor.* iii. 8). For what is the meaning of "according to his own labour," but that he who has laboured the more will receive the more, and he who has laboured the less will receive the less? S. Paul says the same in another place (2 *Cor.* ix. 6; *Gal.* vi. 7).

As to their objection, that that which is called a heritage cannot be a reward, they show that they act foolishly in judging no otherwise of the divine than of the human heritage. For a heritage often falls to the son without thought or judgment, and against the will of the parents. But God does not dispense His heritage so rashly. By a sure judgment He gives it to us, both as we are sons, and as we have merited it. He gives, because it is to sons. Because it is to merits, He gives the greater reward to those who have merited the greater, and the less to those who have merited the less. Because it is given to sons it is called a heritage; and because it is given to sons who have merited, it is called a reward.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN SENDS HIS DISCIPLES TO CHRIST, WHO UPBRAIDS THE JEWS WITH THEIR INCREDULITY, AND CALLS TO HIM SUCH AS ARE SENSIBLE OF THEIR BURDENS.

Verse 1. *And it came to pass.*

THE Hebrew is וַיְהִי; the Greek, as translated by the LXX., καὶ ἐγενετο—it "has been," or "has been done," or "has happened"; but the last meaning does not suit the passage so well, because it might seem to imply that the events described took place by accident, whereas they were done with deep design. The Evangelists copy the LXX. S. Matthew has passed over the Acts of the Apostles in their mission, S. Mark (vi. 12, 13) and S. Luke (ix. 6) relating them briefly.

When Jesus had made an end of commanding ("*consummasset præcipiens*").

Præcipere, the particle put for the infinitive by Greek idiom. The Latins would have said: *Cum præcipiendi finem fecisset.* Those commands which divines distinguish from counsels are not necessarily understood here, but that instruction which consists partly of commands and partly of counsels, which Christ gave the Apostles. This is the meaning of διατάττειν, "to set in order," "to dispose" (1 *Cor.* xi. 34).

He passed from thence.

Lest, whilst the Apostles were employed in their mission, His presence might take from their authority and obscure

the brightness of their miracles. Hence Theophylact thinks that Christ did no miracles in the meanwhile, and therefore that the Evangelist did not say that He worked no miracles, but only taught: a slender conjecture.

In their cities.

Many think that the cities of the disciples are meant: but why are they called "theirs"? Some suppose that the cities of Galilee are referred to. For the Apostles were all or most of them of Galilee (*Acts* ii. 7). So Euthymius and Hugo. Others, the cities in which the Apostles had preached, as in *S. Luke* x. 1. But this view is not acceptable, both because it has no trustworthy authority to support it, and because they only are called the cities of the Apostles in which they preached, or which they passed through; and the Evangelist says that Christ, immediately on sending away the Apostles, went into another place. This seems, therefore, difficult of acceptation. Christ sent them, then, as S. Luke says (x. 1), into every city and place into which, not immediately, but after a long time, He would come Himself. He also relates, not that Christ came to them, but that they returned to Him (verse 17). The explanation of Euthymius and Bede seems better: that the cities of Judah are meant, the relative either being put without an antecedent, or being referred to the remote one of chap. x. 6; "Go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; or to verse 23: "When they shall persecute you in this city, flee ye to another". Either manner of speech is very common with the Hebrews (4 *Kings* xvii. 29; 3 *Kings* v. 3).

Verse 3. *Art Thou He that art to come?*

The passage is difficult, because a doubt is apt to arise as to how John, who had confessed Christ to be the Lamb of God before He had done any miracles, could appear really to doubt after so many. S. Justin Martyr, indeed

(or whoever is the author), in the 38th question to the Orthodox, and Tertullian (iv., *Against Marcion*), do not hesitate to say that John did really doubt. Tertullian adds what is worse, that he doubted because the spirit of prophecy had passed from him to Christ. Some, as this was most senseless, have sought another explanation: that John did not doubt whether Christ were the Lamb of God and the true Messiah, such as he had before testified him to be, but whether He would die and descend into hell. To this opinion, for want of a better, the greatest number of the Ancients incline (S. Ambrose, vii., *On S. Luke;* Eusebius, *Emissa Hom.;* Jul. Pomerius, book iii., *Cont. Jud.;* Venantius, *On the Apostles' Creed;* S. Gregory, *Hom.* i. *on Ezekiel*). S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxvii.), also, and Theophylact (*Comment., in loc.*) speak of it, but they both rightly refute it. For how could John be ignorant of the death of Christ, and His descent into hell, of which no prophet, and no man of learning who had studied the works of the prophets, was ignorant?

The opinion therefore of S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, The Author, S. Cyril of Alexandria (2 *Thesauri.*, iv.), Euthymius, Theophylact, Rupertus, that John himself had no doubts, but that his disciples had some, is true. For they so loved their own master, that though he preferred Christ far before himself, and declared that he was not worthy to loose His shoestrings, they would not believe him. They thought, perhaps, that John spoke from modesty, not truth, and, as much less as he made himself than Christ, so much the greater they believed him to be. Hence came their jealousy of Christ (*S. John* iii. 26). When, then, John saw his death to be at hand, and he heard of these miracles which must have caused even the hardest to believe, he sent his disciples to Him, that, as they had not believed himself, they might believe Christ's miracles. He sent them, therefore, as if he himself doubted, because they

would never have ventured to ask Christ in their own names. So the most skilful physician feigns himself sick to cure those that are sick (2 *Cor.* xi. 29). "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" It is clear that this is the true meaning from the reason given in verse 2. "When John had heard in the prison the works of Christ." What works? His miracles. Did the miracles of Christ cause doubt in him who not only believed in Him, but also proclaimed Him before any of them were done? He sent his disciples, therefore, that they might see them and cease to doubt.

S. Jerome and Bede add something further: that the disciples of John did not doubt whether Christ was the true Redeemer, but whether He would undergo death and descend into hell; and they were sent to Him to learn this. But the idea does not agree with the context. For how would they learn from the miracles whether Christ would die and go down into hell?

Verse 4. *Relate to John.*

Christ knew that they came to ask for themselves, not for John; but He would not show this, lest He should seem to accuse them of unbelief and simulation. He said, therefore, "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen". Or perhaps they thought that John doubted truly, and not merely in pretence. For it is not to be believed that he said this to the disciples that they might question Christ the more freely, and that, the master believing afterwards the more easily, and, as it were, changing his opinion, they also must change theirs. When we descend to vice we are willing to be leaders. We are ashamed to turn to virtue without a leader.

What you have heard and seen.

"You have heard of some of my miracles from those who saw them, and some you have seen yourself." For S. Luke (vii. 21) writes that Christ healed many blind before

them, and cured many that were afflicted with various diseases, and cast out many devils. But why did not Christ answer plainly that He was the Christ, when He said so to the woman of Samaria though she did not ask Him? (*S. John* iv. 26). S. Chrysostom and Rupertus reply that He would convince unbelievers by deeds, not words (as *S. John* v. 33-36, and x. 37, 38, and xv. 24). Why, then, did He say that He was Christ to the Samarian woman? Because He knew, as the result proved, that she would easily believe His words?

Verse 5. *The poor have the Gospel preached to them.*

Theophylact and Euthymius take the verb actively, as if they said: The poor preach the Gospel; for they say that the Apostles are called the poor, because they were in a humble and poor condition; and the verb εὐαγγελίζομαι is not always used in a passive sense, as has been said in the Preface. But sometimes it is so (as *Heb.* iv. 2; 1 *Pet.* i. 25; iv. 6); and this is the only meaning to be given to it here. For while the Gospel should be preached to all alike, Christ mentions only the poor: firstly, because this was to be numbered among the miracles; for what is more wonderful than that a poor man should be made a King? and secondly, that He might make allusion to the Prophet (*Isa.* lxi. 1), and show that He was the Christ of whom the Prophet spoke.

Verse 6. *That should not be scandalised in Me.*

Whoever did not derive death from the source whence he ought to have gained life, and whoever was moved to belief by the miracles, would not have been moved to accuse Him, like the Scribes and Pharisees, who said that He cast out devils by the prince of the devils. For He was a rock of offence and a stone of stumbling (*Isa.* viii. 14; *Rom.* ix. 33), and placed for the ruin of many (*S. Luke* ii.

34), but not for those who believe. To these He was the chief corner-stone elect—as 1 *Pet.* ii. 6, 7. S. Jerome and Bede think that by these words Christ meant to mark the disciples of John who did not believe.

Verse 7. *And when they went their way.*

Why not before? S. Chrysostom and Euthymius answer that Christ would not appear to praise and flatter John before His disciples.

Jesus began to say.

Why? Lest they who were present and had heard of the message of John should think that he had changed his former opinion of Christ from which he had borne such exalted testimony to Him, or had really begun to doubt, and they also should waver in faith—as S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Cyril (lib. ii., cap. 4), Bede, The Author, Theophylact, and Euthymius have observed, and which the following comparison of the "reed" confirms. As if He had said: "John was not a man of light mind, and apt to change his opinion like a reed".

What went ye out for to see?

Why did not Christ say rather: "What manner of man do you think John?" in allusion to what had been said (iii. 5, and *S. Luke* iii. 7); as if He should say: "There is no reason why you should regret having gone out to see a man of singular character, as if he had changed for the worse; for he is greater than you thought him when you went out to see him".

Verse 10. *For this is he.*

He proves what He had said before, that John was greater than a prophet; for He was in a manner an angel, and not an ordinary angel, but that most noble one of

which God had said through Malachi: "Behold, I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face" (iii. 1). Other prophets and priests are called angels and prophets by the same Prophet (ii. 7, and *Acts* vii. 53), but in another sense than John. They because they were sent to men; John because He was sent to Christ, that is, to God Himself. And even before His face; that is, to go most immediately before Him, which is the privilege of the most honoured friend; other servants following and not going before the Master, as has been observed by S. Chrysostom and The Author.

In this sense is to be understood John's denial that he was a prophet (*S. John* i. 21); for he was not one like the rest, who foretold the coming long after of Christ. He was not a prophet, because he did not foretell Christ as about to come, but he pointed Him out with his finger as present. He was a prophet, as having recognised Christ by the Holy Spirit, when no one had pointed Him out; although Christ denied him to be a prophet in one sense, and he denied himself to be one in another,—Christ to show that he was greater, he himself to show that he was less, but each with the same end; because he was not a prophet like the rest.

Why he should be more than a prophet is not difficult to be understood. For his life was most notable; and though he did no miracle, he was himself a perpetual miracle. Conceived by miracle, recognising his coming Lord while yet in the womb, and pointing Him to his mother; by miracle loosing his father's tongue when circumcised; living by miracle among the wild beasts; and, as The Author writes, not only equalling angels, but even surpassing them; who when he was a man and not an angel led an angelic and not a human life, so that even Jews, and not wholly without reason, thought that he was a true angel, as Eusebius (*De Demons*, ix. 8) says.

Before Thy face.

In *Malachi* iii. 1 it is not read "before Thy face," but "before My face". But the meaning is the same. For there Christ spoke of Himself; here the Father speaks of the Son. Hence, too, the divinity of Christ can be proved. For it is certain that it is God who is speaking by the Prophet; from the same place, however, it is plain that it was Christ.

Verse 11. *There hath not risen.*

The Hebrew has לא יקום. The Latins say "has been," *extitit;* but "risen" seems to have a deeper meaning, for it signifies not only that He was, but also that He was eminent.

There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist.

A difficult passage, for it does not appear how the saying, which so exalts John, not only above all other men, but even seems to lower Christ Himself, can be true. The modern heretics have found an easy way of solving the difficulty. They say that the office and dignity of John are compared with those of the older prophets; not his holiness with theirs. They prove this from S. Luke, who does not say absolutely that no one is greater than John, but that there was no greater prophet. Then, that even from this passage it might be proved that John was more than a prophet. But this path, which seems to them plain, leads to a dangerous error, and is wholly divergent from the meaning of Christ and piety. All ancient authors, without, I believe, one single exception, have explained this passage of the holiness, and not of the office, of John—Tertullian (*De Baptismo*), S. Cyril Jerus. (*Catech.* iii.), S. Cyril Alex. (ii. 4, *Thesaur.*, and lib. ii., *On S. John* xxxiv.), Ambrose (ii., *On S. Luke*), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxviii. *in loc.*), The Author (*Hom.* xxvii.), S. Jerome, S. Augustin

(*Tract.* xiii. *on S. John*, and *Cont. Advers. Leg. et Proph.*, ii. 5), S. Hilary (*Can.* xi.), Maximus (*Hom. on S. John*); and, as I think, there is no other opinion. And if we consider the object of Christ, we shall see that the idea of the above heretics is repugnant to it. Christ did not desire to prove that John was adorned with the gift of prophecy, and *therefore* excelled the rest. For He had said this in verse 9, and the words, "more than a prophet" and "there hath not risen a greater prophet," would have accorded badly. For, if he were more than a prophet, who could doubt that there would never have been a greater prophet than he? Christ wished to declare to His hearers John's singular sanctity, lest from his mission, "Art Thou He?" they should doubt of his constancy and virtue. What has this to do with office, when the question is of the manner of life? Surely, when Christ said, "What went ye out to see?" He spoke, not of John's office, but of his manner of life. What man went you out to see? how devout an one, how religious, how holy? For His addition, the reed, and soft clothing, are opposed, not to office, but to manner of life; the reed to constancy, the soft clothing to rigour and hardness.

Then, when He adds, "He that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven," it is not doubtful that these are compared with him in the same manner as that in which he is compared with those who had been under the Law. But the others are compared with him, not in excellence of office, but in holiness of life. For it is not sense to say that the least prophet in the kingdom of heaven is a greater prophet than he; but that any man is, or if he will, can be, more blessed than he, as shall be explained hereafter.

John, therefore, is not compared to those who were under the Law in office, but in holiness. This is seen in verse 12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it

away". That is, it is open to all; to whoever will try for it. Whoever will contend for it will be greater than John the Baptist; not in the office of prophet (which is given freely, and is not the reward of labour), but in holiness, which the more any man tries after it, the more he will obtain. Lastly, the words of Christ, "There hath not risen among men that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist," had been foretold by the Angel (*S. Luke* i. 15). "He shall be great before the Lord." But the Angel spoke of his life, not of his office. This is the meaning of "before the Lord". For no man is great before God, unless he be just and holy. What they object to from another passage (*S. Luke* vii. 28), other Catholics before us have explained.

1. Euthymius says that the name prophet itself, in *S. Luke*, means, not the office, but holiness, because the prophets both were, and were held to be, holy men. Holy men, though not prophets, used to be called prophets. In this sense, we see that Christ was universally so called by the Jews, not because He foretold the future, but because His miracles showed His holiness (*S. Matthew* xxi. 11; *S. Mark* vi. 15; *S. Luke* vii. 16; xxiv. 19; *S. John* iv. 19; vi. 14; vii. 40, 52; ix. 17). But even were it the name of an office in *S. Luke*, they would gain nothing from the above passage. For we grant that John was compared to the prophets of the Old Testament alone. This is to be gathered from S. Luke, and The Author (*Hom.* xxvii.) and S. Augustin (ii., *Cont. Advers. Leg. et Proph.*) freely admit it. But does it therefore follow that he is compared with the prophets only in his office of prophet? The above authors admit the former; but the latter they deny. For, because the prophets were held the most holy of all men, when John is compared with them, he is compared in holiness; and when he is preferred to them, he is preferred to all other holy men, though they are not named.

2. But there remains a greater question: How among those born of women is no one greater, that is, more holy, than John? Was not Christ so? Many, by various means, exclude Christ from this comparison. Many explain it by the word "woman," which seems to mean *corruptas*, whilst Christ was born of a most pure Virgin—as say S. Ambrose (v., *On S. Luke*), Jerome, Bede, Theophylact. "He," says S. Ambrose, "was, I affirm, greater than all, but among those born of a woman, not of a pure Virgin. For he was greater than those to whom he could be equal in the manner of his birth."

Others say, because He did not say born of women as Christ is said to have been made of a woman (*Gal.* iv. 4), but amongst those born *mulierum*. For Christ was not born *mulieris*, but *de muliere*. So The Author (*Hom.* xxvii.): "It is one thing," he says, "to be born *mulieris*, and another to be born *de muliere*. He who is born *mulieris* is born *in muliere*, and has his origin *de muliere*, and before the woman he was not. But he who is born *de muliere* is not born *in muliere*. But Christ was born *de muliere*." Others think that the word "born," γεννήτοις, means those only who are born of man and woman; for this is to be, properly speaking, born—γεννᾶν. This may be true, but it is not necessary. Others are said to be born *mulierum*, who are not born *e Deo*, but of the will of man and the flesh, to whom are opposed those who are born *e Deo*, that is to those who are re-born *e Divino Spiritu*, among whom he that is the least is greater than John Baptist. So S. Cyril of Alexandria, *On Thess.* iv., lib. ii.

Others would have Christ excluded from the words that follow: "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven"—as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius. It may be so, but it does not solve the question. For, granting that Christ is excluded, what are we to say of His most holy Mother, whom

none can deny to have been more holy than John by as much nearer as His Mother came to touch Christ than His forerunner? The brief and easy answer to this is, that John, as S. Jerome says, is compared, not with all saints, but only with those of the Old Testament. But Christ, His Mother, and all the Apostles belong to the New Testament. Nor is there in the words "born *mulierum*" any great mystery: that it is a Hebraism, which by periphrasis calls all men born of women, *nati mulierum.*

He that is lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

S. Augustin (*Cont. Advers. Leg. est Proph.*, ii. 5) says heaven is the kingdom of heaven, and he explains those who are in the kingdom of heaven to be the angels who are in heaven. But how did Christ say that the angels were greater than John the Baptist? for the subject was not angels, but men. S. Jerome and Bede also think that heaven is the kingdom of heaven, and that those who are in it are happy in heaven, among whom he that is least is greater than John, because, says S. Jerome, it is one thing to possess the crown of victory, another to be yet in the thick of the fight. Many think that this was said of Christ, but all do not understand it in the same sense. Some explain it that he who was lesser in the kingdom of heaven, that is, the Church: "I who am the most lowly of the lowly am greater than he". So Rupertus. Others that "I, who am both later in time and, in the opinion of others, less than John, am greater than he," as John himself said: "He that cometh after me" (iii. 11). So S. Chrysostom, The Author, Euthymius, and Theophylact. S. Augustin approves this view (*Tract.* xiii. *on S. John*, and ii., *Leg. et Proph.*, chap. v.). There is a view: "Whoever is less"—*i.e.*, more humble—"than John is greater than he, because he that humbles himself shall be exalted".

It seems difficult to think that the kingdom of heaven

is put for heaven, because it is clear that Christ used an antithesis between the Old and New Testament; this is evident from verses 12, 13. Or, that Christ is compared with John, firstly, because such comparison is not to the point when the Gospel is compared with the Old Testament; secondly, and especially, because Christ said openly of Himself that He was greater than Jonas or Solomon (xii. 41, 42); and lastly, because the force is lost unless the saying is general, and not limited to John, who is lesser; that is, whosoever is less, or whosoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Such seems to be the meaning of the passage, and thus the antithesis between the Gospel and the Law which Christ used is clear, and very aptly agrees with the persons of the Law, as if it were said: "He who is least in the Gospel is greater than he who is the greatest in the Law". It is a known axiom of philosophy: the least thing of the greatest is greater than the greatest of the least.

There remains, however, as appears, a great difficulty: How he who is the least in the Gospel is greater, that is, holier, than John. It may be answered in two ways:

1. That Christ spoke precisely of John and of those who received the Gospel, as far as he pertains to the Law and they to the Gospel. For although it is no way doubtful that John far excelled not only many, but the greater number, of those who are in the Gospel, in righteousness, yet whatever holiness he and the other holy men under the Law possessed, they possessed not of the Law, but of the Gospel; the future virtue of which was extended even to them, however far remote from it; and therefore he who is least in the Gospel is shown to have been greater than he who is greatest in the Law, because the latter was, as it were, his heritage and home production; the former was alien to him, and thus he is made greater, as it were, by a virtue borrowed and received (*mutuo accepta*).

For S. Paul so speaks of the Law and the Gospel, as teaching that the Law was not of faith, but appropriates the faith of the Gospel (*Rom.* iii. 27, 28-31; *Gal.* iii. 12). For Abraham, who is the Father of all the faithful, was not in the Gospel but in the Law, but rather he was before the Law. But S. Paul denies that the Law had faith and justified, because it justified not of itself, but of the future Gospel, as if it had an anticipative faith, and justified by grace borrowed from the Gospel.

2. He, therefore, who is least in the Gospel is called greater than he who is under the Law, not because he is immediately and at once greater, but because, from the nature of the Gospel, he is able to be. What is under the Law? Cannot everyone who wishes be greater than John? He is able to be so, perhaps, but not from the nature of the Law, which was shut by certain barriers. When these are torn away, "from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (verse 12). Thus everyone who uses greater strength is more holy in proportion. Previously, to the prophets or other holy men, as their office or ministry (whether of foretelling or prefiguring the coming Christ) required, greater or lesser grace was given, and the greatest to John, because he had the duty not only of foreshowing Christ, but even of pointing Him out with his finger. This grace was afterwards poured out, and, when in their midst, every man received as much of it as he in strength and heart contended for. This is the meaning of "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,"* &c. (verse 12).

Verse 12. *The kingdom of heaven.*

Some think that Christ Himself was called the Kingdom of Heaven, as S. Ambrose (*Serm.* xv. *de Nat. Dom.*).

* The 8vo omits the greater part of the Commentary on these and the preceding words of the eleventh verse.

Others think it life eternal or heaven, as Gregory (*Hom.* xx. *in Evangel.*); Bede (*in loc.*). Others faith, as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact. Others the Church or Gospel, as in many other passages, which opinion of these alone seems tenable; for, as has been said, there is an antithesis in the former verse between the Law and the Gospel.

Suffereth violence.

Many explain it by saying that the kingdom is gained by mortification, penitence, ignominy, poverty, and the way to it is that pointed out by John both by word and deed (S. Basil, *Orat. de Abdicat. Rerum;* S. Chrysostom; S. Jerome; S. Augustin, ii. 99, *Evangel., Quæst.* 37; S. Gregory, *Hom.* xx. *in Evangel.*; Theophylact; Euthymius; Bede, *In Comment.*; S. Bernard, *In Sent.*, cap. v.). The opinion of S. Hilary (*Can.* xi.), Ambrose (*Lib. in Luc.*, vi., and *Serm.* xv. *de Nat. Dom.*), seems especially good. That it is said to suffer violence because it is not confined to one people, as in the old Law, and kept within certain bounds, but is open to all, and is offered to all, that everyone who wills may hasten into it; and it is not given to inheritance as to the Jews, but to virtue (*S. Matt.* viii. 11, 12). For we are said to bear a thing away when we take it out of the hands of another person; as many will come from the east and west, and snatch it out of the hands of the Jews who were in possession of it. The centurion snatched it out of the hand of the Jews, of whom Christ said: "Not in Israel," and who believed when they did not. The woman of Canaan did the same who showed by her words to Christ that she had more faith than the Jews, and so gained the cure of her daughter (xv. 28). This will carry the greater conviction if we see that the verses are transposed, and that the above words ought to come in the place of verse 13, and that that verse should come here, as the coherence and consequence of the sentence requires. For Christ proves

that he who is least in the kingdom of heaven can be greater than John, because he is bound by no ties of the Law. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John; and S. Luke (xvi. 16) says: "The Law and the Prophets were until John; from that time the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone useth violence towards it". But S. Matthew here, as in other places, has not observed the order of the history.

Verse 13. *For all.*

If, as has been said, this verse were united to verse 11, everyone would see why they are given. For S. Matthew said there: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he". The reason is given by him: "For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John"; that is, endured, lasted. As if he had said: "Before, men were bound, as it were, by the chain of the Law, nor was it lawful for anyone who pleased to break into the kingdom of heaven," but "from the days of John the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence". Therefore, there is no one who, if he wills to make the attempt, may not be greater than John. The causal "for" [*enim*] in this place (verse 13), and the appositive "but" [*autem*], in verse 12, have this force.

The Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

All the Ancients, almost, explain this passage to mean, that the brightness and light of the Gospel are here opposed to the shadow of the Law. For they do not suppose the allusion to be to all the prophets, but to those only who foretold the coming of Christ. For these all, and in the spirit alone, darkly foresaw Him as being yet distant, and afar off; and foreshadowed Him in words still darker. John both saw Him present with his eyes, and

pointed Him out with his finger. So say S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Euthymius.

This seems a true explanation, but not sufficiently to the point, for John was not mentioned by Christ among the prophets and saints of the New Testament, but of the Old. He is compared to the latter: "There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist". He is opposed to the former: "Yet he that is lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he". The meaning, then, seems to be that the Law and the Prophets prophesied unto John; that is, flourished, were in force, discharged their office. He calls the whole Old Testament the Law and the Prophets, as in vii. 12, xxii. 40; and to prophesy means to discharge the whole duty of a prophet, as, in 1 *Esdras* v. 1, Haggai and Zacharias are said to have done. Christ, therefore, only willed to say that the Law and the Prophets lasted until John, as is easily seen from the antithesis. "From the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence" (verse 12). For the Evangelist opposes the kingdom of heaven to the Law and the Prophets: that is, the New Testament to the Old; and the word prophesying to that of seizing and suffering violence; as if he had said, "The Law flourished even till John, which was given only to the Jews, and did not aid men, but oppressed them; and, therefore, no one in it rose to be greater than John the Baptist; but henceforth the hindrances of the Law are removed, and the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and he who is the least in it is greater than John".

But it may be asked how the Law can be said to have remained until John, when it was not abrogated immediately on his coming, but lasted a long while? The answer may be—(1) The meaning is not that the Law lasted even till John, that is, to his nativity, but that it flourished till his preaching. (2) Nor does it mean that it

was extinguished then, at once, in a moment of time; but when the Gospel began to be, then it began to die, as has been explained (chap. v., verse 17).

Verse 14. *And if you will receive it.*

S. Chrysostom brings two reasons why Christ does not say absolutely he (John) is Elias.

1. No one ought to be compelled to believe; for it is not faith, unless it is free and voluntary.

2. The other, which Theophylact also adopts, was to signify that John was Elias, if they would consider the object of each with attention, and consider their mutual resemblance.

It may rather be that Christ spoke thus to show that John was not actually Elias, but in office and effect for that which Elias was to perform at the second coming of Christ, John performed at the first coming. But he could not do this except to those who were willing and who received him. Therefore, Christ said: "If you will receive it"; as if He had said: "If you are willing to receive it, this shall be to you Elias, for he shall turn you to God; and if you will not receive it, he shall not be such".

He is Elias.

God had promised that He would send Elias (*Mal.* iv. 5, 6). This is clearly said of the second coming of the Lord. It has therefore been the unvarying opinion of the Church that Elias would verily come before what is there called the great and dreadful day. So Hippolytus (*De Consummat.*), Tertullian (*De Anim.*), Origen (*Tract.* iii. *on S. Matt.*), S. Ambrose (*On Rom.* iv., or whoever was the author), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* iv. *on 2 Thess.*), S. Augustin (*Bk.* lxxxiii. *qq., q.* 58; *Tract.* iv. *on S. John*), S. Jerome (*on Matt.* xvii.), Theodoret (*Comm. on Mal.* iv.), S. Gregory (ix., *On Job* iv.; xi. 9; xx. 25; xxxv. 10); and

which is proved not only from that chapter of *Malachi*, but from other places of Scripture as well (*S. Matt.* xvii. 10, 11; *S. Mark* ix. 11, 12).

The same was the opinion of the Jews, though perhaps they did not know the time of His coming. This is shown from *S. Matt.* xvi. 14, and *S. Mark* vi. 15. But Christ said that John was Elias: not that he was Elias in person, for this John denied (*S. John* i. 21), but that he had come in the spirit and power of Elias, as the Angel had foretold (*S. Luke* i. 17). There is no contradiction, therefore, between the words of Christ and of John (S. Augustin, *Tract.* iv. *on S. John*; S. Gregory, *Hom.* vii. *in Evang.*).

Verse 15. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

To hear, in this place, means to understand and obey—as *S. Luke* x. 16; *S. Matt.* xviii. 15; *S. Mark* viii. 18. He shows, therefore, that not all who have ears have ears to hear; that is, ears teachable and obedient (xiii. 16; *Is.* vi. 9). Christ uses this expression when He speaks of matters that are of great gravity, and which affect the hearers very nearly, to arouse their interest and attention (xiii. 9, 43; *S. Mark* iv. 9, 23; *S. Luke* viii. 8). He spoke so here, as there were many listeners to understand what He said, that the Law and the Prophets flourished only until John. Afterwards, that the kingdom of heaven suffered violence; that is, that no way of salvation remained to them if they trusted in the Law, and did not receive John, and Christ, whom John pointed out. In this sense S. Chrysostom and Euthymius explain it.

Verse 16. *But whereunto shall I esteem this generation to be like?*

"This generation" is a Hebraism הדור הזה. From *S. Luke* vii. 29, 30, we see whom and why Christ upbraids in these words. He speaks of the Scribes and Pharisees.

It is like to children.

We are told that there was a game among the Jewish boys in which they divided into two bands, and one wept while the other piped, but both sang: the one, "We have lamented and you have not mourned"; and the other, "We have piped to you and you have not danced". But although this is stated on the authority of Theophylact (*On S. Luke* vii.) and De Lyra (on this place), perhaps because they have no Jewish authority, or no more ancient one, it does not seem probable; nor is it requisite that Christ should have taken a similitude from an ordinary custom. It is enough if He did so from a thing that happened commonly, or that might have happened. For we do not always copy; we sometimes invent comparisons. As if we should say: "The Scribes and Pharisees act like boys playing in the market-place, and saying, 'We have lamented,'" &c. There is a much greater difficulty in the application of the comparison. For Christ seems to have compared the Scribes and Pharisees to boys who lamented and sang, and who said to their comrades: "We have piped to you," when it would appear as if He ought rather to have compared them with those who, when some who were of their party piped, would not dance, and with others who, when they lamented, would not mourn. Euthymius thinks that Christ and John were called the boys from their innocence, to whom the Jews said, "We have piped to you," &c.—a meaning wholly foreign to the mind of Christ. S. Jerome and all other authorities think Christ and John the boys who piped and lamented; for Christ, not turning from pleasantness and the ordinary rule of life, seemed to sing, and John, clothed in sackcloth and living a life of the utmost austerity, to lament. Cardinal Hugo seems to have apprehended the meaning much more correctly; for he says that persons are not compared to persons, but the thing to the thing; not parts to parts, but the

whole to the whole; as if Christ had said: "The Pharisees are like boys saying to their comrades, 'We have sung to you,' &c. John has lamented to you, and you have not mourned; the Son of man has sung to you and you have not danced." That this is the true sense shall be shown on verse 19. It is sufficient at present to observe that it is very common in parables not to compare persons to persons, nor parts to parts, but the whole to the whole, as in xiii. 24. For the kingdom of heaven is not like the man, but rather the seed or the field. The meaning is, the same thing happens in the kingdom of heaven as would in a field if a man sowed good seed in his field. And again in the same sense in verse 45. For it is not like the man, but rather the pearl; and the same thing happens in the kingdom of heaven as if a man should seek good pearls, and when he had found one of great price, should sell all that he has and buy it. There are numberless examples of the same kind; so that they lose their labour who endeavour to show how persons answer to persons, and parts to parts. We must look at the whole body of the sentence and extract the whole result from the whole parable, lest by division into parts it come to nothing and lose all its force.

Verse 18. *Neither eating.*

He is said not to have eaten, either because no one saw him eat, or because he ate sparingly and slightly, or because he did not eat like men, but rather subsisted on the food of wild animals.

He hath a devil.

We do not find anything said elsewhere against John by the Jews; but from this place it is plain that he was considered by some as one possessed by a devil.

Verse 19. *The Son of man came.*

Why Christ was called the Son of man has been explained on chap. viii. 20.

And wisdom is justified by her children.

A difficult passage. The difficulty consists in three points. 1. What it is that is called wisdom. 2. Who they are who are called the children of wisdom. 3. What it is to be justified.

Some think that Christ Himself is called Wisdom; others that it is Divine Providence.

The children of wisdom some think Christ, others John. Others, the Jews who received them. Others, those who did not do so. Others, again, deny that they are called the children of wisdom at all. These say that the relative pronoun "her" refers, not to wisdom, but to generation; as if it had been said: Wisdom is justified by the children of this generation. These appear to have known Greek, but not Hebrew, or they would have known that it is an idiom of that language to call wise men the children of wisdom.

"Justified" is taken by some to mean "to be praised"; by others "to be freed". Others think that it is put for "to appear righteous"; and some explain it thus: "Wisdom, that is, Divine Providence, has been justified, that is, freed from all calumny and just cause of blame by her children, that is, by John and Me, who are the Sons of Wisdom, that is, who are wise. She has been freed, because we have done what we could in different ways—I by singing, John by lamenting, to bring men to salvation, so that no one can want Divine Providence towards men."

Others think that "justified" means that the Divine Wisdom is known, praised, and held as just towards men by her sons; that is, by those who are truly wise and embrace her. So S. Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius. Others take justified as "freed," as he who is dead is justified, that is, freed, from sin; so that he cannot sin any more (*Rom.* vi. 7). Wisdom is, with them, Divine Providence, and her sons are the Scribes and Pharisees, who are called the sons of wisdom, not because they are, but because they seem so

to themselves; or because they ought to be so, as in verse 25; so that they have not anything of which to accuse Divine Providence. So S. Chrysostom.

With S. Chrysostom, Jerome, Bede, and Euthymius, I think that Wisdom is Divine Providence, and the sons of wisdom all the Jews with those who received her, and those who did not reject her: not that they were wise, or ought to be, or appeared so to themselves, but because they were as children and disciples of Divine Providence, which governed the Jews in a peculiar manner, as if they were her own sons. Hence she proposed an example in children, not men. But she was justified, that is, declared, by both classes, good and bad; for whilst Christ piped and John lamented, some danced, that is, followed Christ, others mourned, that is, followed John. Others neither mourned nor danced: for they who followed Christ's example and danced, could say to the Scribes and Pharisees, "We have piped to you and you have not danced"; for they are said to pipe because they followed Christ's action, and gave the other Jews an example of dancing.

They who followed John lamented with him, and provoked the Scribes and Pharisees to do the same, but these would not mourn. Christ and John alone are mentioned, because both were leaders: one, of those that danced; the other, of those who mourned. Both classes, therefore—they who believed, and they who believed not—justified the Divine Wisdom: the former, by embracing her; the latter, because they reject her when those embraced her; for, while they believed neither the piping of Christ nor the lamenting of John, they showed plainly that they would not believe, and that they stood by themselves (*per se*), not by the Divine Wisdom, and would not be converted. The first opinion seems to me the better one, for it seems more full, more grand, and more worthy of the majesty of Christ, that the sons of wisdom themselves should justify her,

whether they do or do not receive her. I therefore think, against the opinion of many, that the preposition "by" (*ἀπό, ab*) refers to a person or an agent, not to matter (or a material thing). Everyone, even moderately acquainted with the Greek language, knows that *ἀπό* is often put for *ὑπό*. And the word "and"—"*and* wisdom is justified"—seems to mean that the sons of wisdom, some by learning, others by not learning, have justified their mistress. Certainly that word forbids the explanation of those who say that wisdom is justified by her children, as by those only who receive her; or Christ would not have said "and" (*καί*) but, "but" (*ἄλλα, veruntamen*). For although after the Hebrew "and" is sometimes put for "but," it would in this place seem to offer violence to the taste, in which every word leads us to the natural signification.

Verse 20. *Then.*

This was when He had sent His disciples to preach the Gospel, as appears from *S. Luke* x. 13. For He appears from hence to have taken the occasion of saying what follows; because he had sent the Apostles to remote places, as Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum (in which the disciples did not stay long, but in which Christ Himself had preached), which would not receive the Gospel.

Verse 21. *Woe to thee, Corozain.*

Corozain, Bethsaida, and Capharnaum were cities of Galilee, near the Lake of Genesareth, where Christ very frequently stayed with His disciples, preaching the Gospel and working miracles. He therefore upbraids them with their unbelief.

If in Tyre and Sidon.

Christ opposes these two cities to them for three reasons —(1) Because they were Gentiles; (2) because they were near; (3) because they were full of idolatry, sensuality,

avarice, and every kind of wickedness, as the Prophets Isaiah (xxiii. 1), Ezekiel (xxvi. 2; xxvii. 3; xxviii. 2, 12), Amos (i. 9) bear witness.

Long ago.

They would not have waited as long as you. They would not have wanted so many exhortations, or so many miracles.

In sackcloth and ashes.

That is, they would have brought forth extreme penitence, for this was the garb of the deepest penitence (*Isaiah* lviii. 5; *Jeremiah* vi. 26; xxv. 34; *Lamentations* ii. 10; *Daniel* ix. 3). The Gentiles seem to have imitated it (*Jonah* iii. 6, 8).

And thou, Capernaum.

Christ names Capernaum separately, and finally, and by apostrophe, because He visited it more frequently, so that it was even called His country, as in ix. 1; and because, being larger and a seaport, it most probably abounded in vice, as is generally the case with seaports and large cities.

Shalt thou be exalted up to heaven.

Ἡ ἕως τοῦ οὐράνου ὑψωθεῖσα, "Which art exalted unto heaven," as S. Luke (x. 15), and as S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact read, who, as they inform us, found in many copies. The meaning is not different, but more plain. Our translator seems to have read ὑψωθησῃ, "who shall be exalted," for ἡ ὑψωθεῖσα, "shalt thou be exalted".

Thou shalt go down even unto hell.

Καταβιβασθήσῃ, "Thou shalt be thrust down, not descend of thy own free will" (chap. xxiii. 12; *Abdias* i. 4). Christ does not speak of the destruction of the city, but of the eternal condemnation of the people. It is to be under-

stood, not of all, but only of the greater number, or of the chief men, such as the Scribes and Pharisees.

Perhaps.

This word is not one expressive here of doubt. It is affirmative with the Greek *ἀν*, as in verse 21.

Verse 25. *At that time.*

This was after the disciples had returned from the mission, as appears from *S. Luke* x. 17. From their joy at finding even the devils subject to them in the name of Christ, and the good success of their mission, Christ took occasion to say what follows, as is observed by The Author (*Hom.* xxviii.).

Answered.

Orsus, a Hebraism ענה. Among them the word "answer" not only means a reply to a question, or to something said by another, but it is frequently used to express the beginning of a sentence, as Euthymius, an author by no means conversant with Hebrew, has observed. Some think that it has its usual meaning here, and signifies the answer given by Christ to the Apostles. But S. Luke puts it after this, and clearly distinguishes it from it (x. 21).

I confess.

Another Hebraism הודה meaning, "I thank thee," "I praise thee," "I confess thee". So in *Ps.* vi. 6; vii. 18; ix. 2; lxx. 8, as S. Jerome, Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxix.), S. Augustin (*Quest.* ix. *on S. Matthew*), Bede, Theophylact, and others without number have observed.

To Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.

S. Athanasius (*To Mark, Rom. Pont.*), S. Cyril (v. 5, *Thesauri.*), have observed, against the Arians, that a pause between the words Father and Lord of heaven and earth was

made by Christ carefully and of design, to show that God was not only His Father, but also His Lord, for He calls the Father not only the Lord of heaven and earth, but His own Lord; and not only His own Lord, but also the Lord of heaven and earth.

Because Thou hast hid these things.

These mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The infants received the preaching and miracles of Himself and the Apostles, but the wise rejected them.

From the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.

Some, as The Author and Theophylact, understand by the wise, the Jews, who were accomplished in the knowledge of the Law; and by the "little ones," the Gentiles, who had not the knowledge of God and the Law; but the Gospel was not yet preached to the Gentiles. The opinion of S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Euthymius, and Bede, that the wise and prudent were the Scribes and Pharisees, and the little ones the Apostles, is better. Though it may be that the little ones were not so much the Apostles, as they who believed their preaching and Christ's; for, as appears from *S. Luke*, the subject was the fruit of their preaching. Christ called them wise, not because they were so, but because they ought to have been so; or because they seemed to themselves to be so, as S. Hilary says; or because they really were wise, not according to the spirit, indeed, but according to the flesh, as is the opinion of S. Chrysostom. For that wisdom is foolishness with God. 1 *Cor.* iii. 19: "The wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God, for it is not subject to the law of God"; and *Rom.* viii. 7. The wise men of this class did not believe (1 *Cor.* i. 26; iii. 18). Those who did believe, Christ calls the little ones, who are babes in malice, as S. Paul says (1 *Cor.* xiv. 20, and 1 *S. Peter* ii. 2).

It may seem wonderful why Christ gave thanks to the Father because He hid the Gospel from the wise, as if He rejoiced over their condemnation. S. Chrysostom answers that Christ did not give thanks because He hid it from the wise, but because, when He had hidden it from them, He revealed it to the little ones. But He certainly hid it. He is not properly said to have hidden it; for He did not hide a thing, properly, who sent His Son to reveal the Gospel to them and to all the other Jews; but He is said to have hidden it because He withdrew it from those who would not receive it. For He would not intrude it by force, nor give it to those who were not worthy, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact say.

Lastly, the Father so hid the Gospel from them, as the Son blinded their eyes. *S. John* ix. 39: "For judgment am I come into the world, that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind".

Verse 26. *Yea, Father.*

Ναὶ ὁ πάτηρ, Næ pater. S. Jerome explains this, as if Christ wished to say, "Holy Father, go on to do as Thou hast begun". Others, "It has been so done, because it so seemed good before Thee"; as if no other cause of the reprobation could be given, but only the will of God. This error all the heretics of our own time hold most pertinaciously. But how and why God had withheld it from the former was explained in the preceding verse. It may, in fact, be explained thus:

"Even so, Father," supply "I confess" from the preceding words; as if He said: "I thank Thee, Father, again and again, because Thou hast willed so to act, as that when the wise would not receive the Gospel, Thou didst not disdain to reveal it to the little ones". For Christ is accustomed to repeat this expression, which He had used before, to strengthen His words more and more; as the

Latins say: *Etiam atque etiam*, or *enimvero* (*S. Luke* xii. 5).

For so it hath seemed good in Thy sight.

A Hebraism for "so it seemed good to Thee".

Verse 27. *All things are delivered to Me.*

It does not easily appear how these words agree with the preceding ones. Most ancient authors think that Christ said them, lest He should have appeared before to give thanks to the Father as an inferior, as S. Hilary, S. Athanasius (*Orat. de Etern. subst. Fill. et Spir. Sanct. cum Deo*), against the followers of Sabellius, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact (*in loc.*). It may rather be thought that He said it to give a reason for His words following, "Come unto Me," verses 28, 29, 30. They are not to be joined to the preceding, but to the following words.

All things.

S. Jerome and Bede explain this of all who come to the Father, as *S. John* vi. 39, and xviii. 9; but S. Hilary and Euthymius, of those things which are known to the Father alone, and which belong to the Divine nature, as *S. John* xvi. 15. But S. Irenæus (lib. iv. 37) and Tertullian (iv., *Cont. Marc.*) say that it means all things that were made by Him; The Author, all the kingdoms of heaven, and of earth, and of hell; S. Chrysostom, all the power of working miracles.

All these are true, but they do not appear to be in harmony with the text. By "all things" it were better to understand, all power of governing and preserving men; as below, xxviii. 18. For He invites men to come to Him, because He is able to save them. It may be asked how Christ speaks? as God, or as man? Theophylact, S. Hilary, and Euthymius think, as God, but that He only means that He, with the Divine nature, received all this

from the Father; as if a beautiful son of a beautiful father should say that he owed all his beauty to his father; nor would he signify by these words that he was therefore inferior to his father. The Arians, therefore, can find no arguments from this passage against the Divinity of Christ. S. Cyril says, that they used to cite it in their support. The Author says, that He spoke as man, which rather agrees with what we have said before. For, as man, He is the head of men.

And no one knoweth the Son but the Father.

S. Chrysostom rightly thinks that these words should be taken with xvi. 17, "or he to whom it shall please the Father to reveal Him," and *S. John* vi. 44, "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him," or they seem to be without force. But now they are added to show that we should not wonder if the Scribes and Pharisees do not believe the Gospel, for they cannot know the Son unless the Father, who alone knows Him, reveal Him; nor can they come to Him unless the Father draw them. But He draws those who will to come, not those who do not will. His words, "No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son," are seemingly to be understood, not of the Divine nature alone, but also of the counsels of the Father, and of the offices of the Son. For no one knows the counsels of the Father, and how He wills men to be saved, but the Son; and no one knows the office of the Son, for the sake of which He came into the world, but the Father. This meaning seems to suit the subject better.

Come to Me all you that labour and are a burthen, and I will refresh you.

Verse 28. *Who labour.*

Who are wearied and fatigued, weighed down by sin, says S. Chrysostom and others: "We wearied ourselves," he

says, "in the way of iniquity" (*Wisd.* v. 7; *Ps.* xxxvii. 5). Some, among whom are S. Hilary and Theophylact, think that Christ alludes to the heavy yoke of the Law as opposed to that of the Gospel. This seems correct; only sin should not be excluded, which the Law rather made more oppressive than lightened.

Verse 29. *Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*

Almost all ancient authors explain these words to mean, "Learn, by my example, to be meek and humble" (as S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxxix.; and S. Augustin, *Serm.* x. *de verb. Dom. sec. S. Matt.*). These words are paraphrased by preachers to mean, "Learn of me—not to work miracles, not to create all things visible and invisible—but to be meek and humble of heart". The saying itself is good, but the explanation is not. Christ wishes to prove that His yoke is pleasant and His burden light. The true meaning, therefore, seems to be that of The Author. "Learn of Me, that is, take My yoke upon you, and try and learn that I am meek and lowly of heart." He invites men to come to Him, because He is not a tyrant, but a kind and mild master. He would not have us trust Himself, but rather take His yoke and try it.

Verse 30. *For my yoke is sweet*—χρήστος.

Christ calls His yoke sweet; using a word in accordance with the manner of life. The Greek χρήστος is "good," "upright," "benign," "sweet"; and applies not so much to things as to persons and manners of life (*mores*), as if He had said, "My yoke is not the yoke of a cruel master, such as the kings of this world lay upon their people, but of a kind, sweet, and gentle friend". S. Jerome, commenting on this passage, raises the question how Christ can call the Gospel a sweet yoke and a light burden, when it appears to be much

more heavy than the Law? In the Law, homicide: in the Gospel, the word Raca: in the Law, adultery: in the Gospel, looking on a woman to lust after her condemns a man (v. 28). The answer is: The Gospel is said to be lighter for four reasons.

1. In the Gospel there are only given us those commands which are necessary to our salvation, which nature herself teaches, and which are contained in one word: "All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them" (vii. 12), as S. Hilary says (*in loc.*). In the Law of Moses, an infinite number of laws is given, which are not given as necessary by nature to our salvation, but to practise a rude people by a moral discipline. S. Peter alludes to this (*Acts* xv. 10).

2. The Gospel removes the more heavy penalties which were threatened by the Law: eye for eye (*Exod.* xxi. 24). The spirit of the Law was the spirit of fear and servitude (*Rom.* viii. 15). The spirit of the Gospel is the spirit of love, kindness, gentleness. When the disciples wanted to bring down fire from heaven to consume those Samaritans who would not receive Christ, He rebuked them and said, "You know not of what spirit you are".

3. In the Law all was done by force, which made the lightest matters most grave. In the Gospel all is done by love and goodwill, and nothing is grave or difficult to one who wills (1 *S. John* v. 3). S. Jerome gives this reason.

4. The Law burthened, but did not assist. But in the Gospel, the Spirit is given with the burthen, and It helps our infirmities, as S. Augustin replies (*Serm.* ix. *Verb. Dom. sec. S. Matt.*).

CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST REPROVES THE BLINDNESS OF THE PHARISEES, AND CONFUTES THEIR ATTRIBUTING HIS MIRACLES TO SATAN.

Verse 1. *Jesus went through the corn on the Sabbath.*

THERE would have been no difficulty if S. Matthew alone had related the history. But now S. Luke (vi. 1) has added to the words δευτεροπρωτῳ, the "second-first Sabbath," and to understand the whole completely, we must know what the meaning of these words is. Many think that the "second-first Sabbath" was the eighth day of those feasts which were kept for eight continuous days: such as the feasts of unleavened bread, and of tabernacles; for the eighth day was kept with the same rites and observances as the first (*Levit.* xxiii. 36-39; *Numbers* xxix. 35); and that it was called the second-first, because it was equal to the first in celebration, though second in place; and that the day mentioned by SS. Matthew and Luke was the eighth day of unleavened bread. So says S. Epiphanius (*Hær.* li.) and most others.

More modern authorities think that the first day of Azymes was so called, as being the second from the Pasch; as Euthymius and others.

Others, again, that it was the Sabbath which was the nearest to some feast which fell on the sixth day of the week; as Theophylact and S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xl.). Others, that it was some second, that is, lesser festival, like the new moons. Others, that there was a double Sabbath: the ordinary one on the seventh day, and some festival

which had fallen on the same Sabbath. For every Sabbath was called a festival.

It would appear that there are certain first principles from which the explanation of the passage would naturally follow.

1. S. Luke, when he called the Sabbath the second-first, did not mean some one of many which were called second feasts, but some one fixed (certain) Sabbath, which alone of all would be called the second-first. For S. Luke wished to name a particular day, that the occasion of the slander of the Pharisees might be the better understood. By this view all those explanations which would make it one of many are confuted ; as those of Euthymius, Isidore, S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact.

2. That Sabbath happened when the corn was ripe, but tender, and not yet reaped, or the disciples would not have plucked the ears and rubbed them between their hands. This overthrows the idea of S. Epiphanius and all who think the second-first Sabbath one of the days of Azymes, for neither on the 15th nor on the 20th of March are the ears sufficiently ripe. S. John shows that at the time of Christ's Passion it was cold, and that they warmed themselves at the fire ; and the feast of weeks was kept fifty days after Pasch, and began from when the first sickle was put to the corn (*Deut.* xvi. 9). It could not have happened, then, on the feast of Azymes, that is, fifty days before ; and we know from experience that not only in Palestine, but in the much hotter climate of Africa, the corn is not ripe so early. It follows from the same reasoning that it could not have been (as some have supposed) at the feast of Tabernacles, because this did not take place till the seventh month (*Lev.* xxiii. 34), when all the harvest was gathered in.

3. We have it from Hebrew tradition that after the Babylonish exile the Jews never kept one feast the day after another, lest the people should be compelled to be

idle two days running. Hence the opinion that the second-first Sabbath was the day immediately after some other feast is erroneous. It follows, therefore, the "second-first Sabbath" could only be the feast of Pentecost, or, what is the same thing, of first fruits, because it was the only one, as we have said, which S. Luke described by its proper name, and it happened when the corn was ripe, but not cut, the festival being kept to signify this.

It remains to be asked, Why was it called second-first? I have found no sufficient reason for this; but the opinion of those seems the best who say that as there were three first or chief festivals besides the Sabbath—Azymes, Weeks, and Tabernacles—(for all the others, as the new moons, were of far lower rank)—the feast of Weeks, both in locality and celebrity, was the second from the first.

Some object that it was lawful to prepare food on the feasts except the Sabbath (*Exod.* xii. 16), and, therefore, that the Pharisees could not accuse the disciples because they rubbed the ears of corn between their hands. They did not accuse them because they prepared food, but because they plucked the ears of corn, as if they were in a sense reaping, which was lawful on no festival. And S. Irenæus (iv. 20) says that it was not forbidden on the Sabbath day and on festivals to pluck ears, but only to reap. But the answer of Christ shows that the disciples did that which otherwise it was not lawful to do had not necessity compelled them, like David, and the presence of the Lord, who was greater than the Temple, excused them as priests.

It may be objected that in the Greek the word is used in the plural, Sabbaths—*ἐν τοῖς σαββάσι*—which has given some reason for thinking that not one festival only, but two or more, were meant, which were either celebrated on the same day or on the day after the other. The answer is easy. It is a Hebraism, and the plural is put for the

singular to show that not many Sabbaths, but one of many, was intended, as in verses 5, 10.

Verse 2. *And the Pharisees seeing them, said to Him.*

S. Luke (vi. 2) says that the Pharisees said, not to Christ but to the disciples, "Why do you do that which is not lawful?" &c. It may be answered that they either spoke to both, first to the disciples and then to Christ, or to Christ only, who answered; but that S. Luke says that they spoke to the disciples, because what they said to the Master they might seem to have said not only about the disciples, but even to the disciples themselves. S. Thomas observes that the Pharisees did not accuse the disciples of having gathered the ears of corn from the field of another, because that was permitted by the Law (*Deut.* xxiii. 25).

Verse 3. *Have you not read.*

Christ objects their ignorance of the Law to those who thought themselves strong in it (Euthymius).

And they that were with Him.

In 1 *Kings* xxi. 1 we find that David was alone, and these words, therefore, do not seem to agree with the history. Some say that David was indeed alone when he entered the house of the high priest, but that he had companions who were waiting for him in another place, as David said to the priest (verse 2); others that he had companions with him, but that the priest, as N. de Lyra says on the passage, asked him why he was alone, not that he was alone, but because when he used to travel in the company of many soldiers he was then attended only by a few: as we say the king travels alone when only a few follow him; others reject both views, because Scripture says plainly that he was alone, and that he afterwards came alone to Achis, and that when he said, "I have

appointed my servants to such and such a place" (verse 2), he spoke falsely to conceal his flight, and that Christ there spoke, not of the truth and of His own opinion, but He merely used the words of David. Neither of these opinions seems to be tenable, because they seem to convict, not only David, but even Christ Himself, almost of a falsehood, and because Christ (*S. Mark* ii. 26 and *S. Luke* vi. 4) says that David ate of the show-bread himself and gave to those who were with him; which I do not see how they could explain if he had no one at all with him. Their opinion seems the best who say that no one was with him when he took the loaves, but that he had some companions in another place to whom he gave of them.

Verse 4. *How he entered into the house of God.*

Everyone knows that there was no Temple then, nor was the ark there, which was in Silo all that time (1 *Kings* i. 24; iii. 21; iv. 3), which was called the house of the Lord; but it is very likely, or rather wholly necessary, that there should have been a tabernacle, where the show-bread was placed; for it was at Nobe, a city of the priests, that Achimelech gave David the loaves (1 *Kings* xxii. 9). What S. Mark (ii. 26) relates as having happened in the time of Abiathar can be more properly discussed in that place.

And did eat the loaves of proposition.

The Hebrews express the loaves of proposition in two ways: לחם הפנים "the bread of faces," as may be said, because in the tabernacle where the Lord dwelt, the loaves were placed six on one side and six on the other, as if before His two faces (for the Hebrews make two faces of a man as we make two cheeks); and "the bread of Ordination or Disposition," לחם המעדכת because they were set forth in order and at a certain time. But they are so styled only in *Paralipomenon* and *Esdras*,

which were written after the captivity (1 *Paral.* ix. 32; xxiii. 29; and 2 *Esdras* x. 33). The LXX. render them in three ways: sometimes as the bread of the faces (as in *Exod.* xxv. 30), ἄρτους ἐνωπίους, sometimes as ἄρτους προσώπου (2 *Esdras* x. 33), most commonly as the bread of proposition, ἄρτους τῆς προθεσεώς (*Exod.* xxxiv. 13; 1 *Kings* xxi. 6, &c.). The Latin always calls them the bread of proposition.

Verse 5. *Or have ye not read in the Law that on the Sabbath days the priests break the Sabbath and are without blame?*

(*Levit.* xxiv. 8, 9; *Num.* xxviii. 9.) Every word, as S. Chrysostom and Euthymius say, has force. In a few words, Christ expressed all that can increase the weight of His example. The Law—which orders the persons of the priests, who ought especially to observe the Sabbath. The place—in the Temple, where they ought to worship. The time—of the Sabbath, which ought most carefully to be observed, for the words, "Break the Sabbath," mean more than merely, Do not observe it. Christ said "break," not that the priests really broke it, but that they did things which, except that the worship of God excused them, it would have been unlawful to do. They slew the victims; they took off their skins; they washed their intestines; they cleaned the wood; they kindled the fire; they circumcised children—as S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, and Euthymius state.

The opinion of our Doctors is confirmed from this passage, that in the celebration of festivals the festival is not violated when those things are done which are necessary to its due celebration, and which could not be done at any other time—as when bells are rung, crosses carried, temples purified, and the like—much less when that is done which is necessary for the salvation of souls, which was properly the present subject. This chiefly excused

the Apostles, who in preaching and working miracles were so occupied that, as S. Mark says, they could not even prepare food or eat it. This is: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice". In this sense, Christ, as it were, says that it was better for the Apostles to save the souls of men than to keep the Sabbath.

Verse 6. *There is here a greater than the Temple.*

There have been different opinions as to what Christ spoke of. But no doubt He called Himself the Temple, because, "In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally" (*Coloss.* ii. 9); and as in verses 41, 42, He speaks of Himself: "The men of Ninive shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the South shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here;" and *infra*, verse 8: "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath"; and as Euthymius and Theophylact say.

Verse 7. *If you knew what this meaneth.*

We have shown, on verse 5, why Christ introduced the testimony of this prophecy. The prophecy itself is given (ix. 13).

Verse 8. *The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.*

Christ proves that He was both greater than the Temple and could dispense with the observance of the Sabbath, for He is Lord "even of the Sabbath," and everyone does as he will with his own. He said to them: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (*S. Mark* ii. 27). He said, therefore, both what S. Matthew relates to prove that He was greater than the Temple, because the

Temple served the Sabbath, and He was Lord even of the Sabbath; and also what S. Mark writes, that the salvation of men was to be preferred to the observance of the Sabbath.

Verse 9. *And when He had passed from thence.*

S. Luke (vi. 6) says that this happened on another Sabbath. This is plain from the above. For Christ came into their synagogue; but the synagogues were held on the Sabbath; and they asked Him whether it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, because that was the Sabbath (S. Augustin, *De Consens.*, ii. 35; Euthymius).

Into their synagogues.

Theirs—theirs who the Sabbath before had accused the disciples of plucking the ears of corn. For Christ did not less seek occasion of being accused by them unjustly than they did of accusing Him, that He might make their accusation a means of teaching and blaming them.

Verse 10. *And they asked Him.*

S. Mark (iii. 4) and S. Luke (vi. 9) say that Christ asked the Pharisees. S. Augustin (ii. 35, *De Consens.*) and Theophylact, on this passage, say that the Pharisees first asked Christ, and that Christ then asked the Pharisees. But it is a more easy answer that S. Mark and S. Luke do not say that Christ asked the Pharisees whether it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, but whether it were lawful to do good or evil? It was not, therefore, the same question which Christ asked the Pharisees as that which they asked Him. But the Pharisees first asked Christ whether it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath day; and Christ, to show their maliciousness, changed the question, and asked them whether it were lawful to do good on the Sabbath or evil, that He might shame them by the very words of His question.

Verse 12. *How much better* ("*magis melior*").

An expression not found among Latin authors, though some ecclesiastical writers used it a thousand years ago. The Greeks speak so, as chap vi. 26, which our version, following the Greek, translates: *Nonne vos magis pluris*, "Are not you of much more value than they?"—a redundant comparative. It may be thought that the Latin translator, for the ποσῷ οὖν διαφερει of the Greek, read ποσῷ οὖν μάλλον διαφέρει, "Therefore it is lawful to do a good deed". Christ does not conclude that it is lawful to do a good deed as the Pharisees had asked Him (*S. Mark* iii. 4; *S. Luke* vi. 9). A general saying, and the word of the Benefactor Himself, accompanied by an act of healing, has greater force, because to heal is to do good.

Verse 15. *But Jesus knowing it.*

No one discovered it to Him, so He had seen their thoughts (verse 25 and ix. 4; *S. Luke* v. 22; vi. 8; ix. 47; xi. 17).

Retired from thence.

To the sea, as we learn from *S. Mark* iii. 7. He fled, as He had taught the Apostles to do (x. 23). He fled, not from fear or inability to defend Himself, but because His hour had not yet come, as S. John says in similar circumstances (vii. 30; viii. 20; xiii. 1; xvi. 21). But He would not resist them, though able to do so; because, as He could avoid them by flight, it was not necessary to do so, and He would not break a bruised reed, as *infra*, verse 20.

And He healed them all.

He healed them—not all who followed Him, but all who were sick and wished to be healed. For the Evangelist only desired to show that Christ, not malignantly and grudgingly, but lavishly and abundantly, conferred the

benefit of healing on all who had faith and were sick, without distinction of persons.

Verse 16. *And He charged them.*

S. Mark (iii. 12) says that He commanded the devils not to declare Him, because they cried out, Thou art the Son of God. Because the devils were in the men, S. Matthew said that He commanded the men. We have shown why He did so (ix. 30).

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled.*

Why the Evangelist brought forward this testimony of Isaiah (xlii. 1), or how he says it was fulfilled, does not appear. Some think that Christ would not have His miracles published, lest the hatred of the Pharisees should be made more bitter; for He would not break a bruised reed. Others refer it to His flight, and say that He fled because by resisting He might break a bruised reed; that is, show less meekness than the Prophet had foretold of Him (S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xli.). Either opinion is probable, but it seems better to refer it to verse 15. For He gave the reasons why He healed all, because, as the Prophet had foretold, He was so meek and gentle that no one in the streets should hear His voice, and so merciful that He would heal all, hurt none, and not even break a bruised reed, nor extinguish the smoking flax.

Verse 18. *Behold.*

Isaiah shows in his prophetic spirit Him whom John afterwards pointed out with his finger (i. 29), and whom the Father showed by His voice from heaven after His baptism (*S. Matt.* iii. 17).

My servant.

He calls Christ a "servant," עבדי as man (*Philipp.* ii. 7; *Isa.* xliii. 10; *Zech.* iii. 8). But he does not call the man

Christ a servant in the same way as others, but *per excellentiam*, and for His own honour, as if God would boast that He had such a servant among men, that His soul could please itself in Him, and could commit to Him that work which is the peculiar one of God—the ruling of the whole Church, and—which is the greatest of all—the recovery of His lost kingdom, as S. Paul says (1 *Cor.* xv. 24). So, if we may compare less things to greater, God is accustomed to call Moses His servant (*Numb.* xii. 7, 8; *Job* i. 8; ii. 3). The LXX. in *Isaiah* have substituted Jacob, either lest God should seem to call Christ His servant, or because they read it so in other places (xli. 8, 9; xliv. 1, 2). We have observed that the LXX., when a passage seems to contain anything absurd, are accustomed to add, omit, or change, to make it sense.

Whom I have chosen.

As man—for among all men He took Him, speaking after the manner of the primitive teachers of the Church, and made Him God (*Ps.* xliv. 3, 8; ii. 6). He chose Him to be a King and to preach His Word who Himself was His Word.

My beloved.

The LXX. added Israel, as they added Jacob (*Isa.* xli. 8), because they had so read it.

I will put My Spirit.

Modern heretics explain this of Christ's baptism, because the Spirit then descended upon Him (iii. 16). Others say that its meaning is that He advanced in wisdom and age, and therefore the Spirit was laid upon Him (*S. Luke* ii. 52). It more certainly refers to His conception, when He was filled with the Spirit (*Isa.* xi. 2), for He was not less than John the Baptist, of whom the angel had said (*S. Luke* i. 15): "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from His mother's womb".

He shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

מחקק *Proferet*; that is, He shall be the lawgiver. But He should give the Law of the Gospel to all nations (*Ps.* ix. 21), and not be like Moses, who gave his own Law to the Jews alone; or, He shall judge all nations, because the Father hath given all judgment to the Son (*S. John* v. 22).

Verse 19. *He shall not contend.*

These words are not found either in the Hebrew or in the LXX. of Isaiah, but it is very likely that the Evangelist added them for explanation. The meaning of the Prophet is, that Christ should judge without the strife and clamour of the Forum, calmly and with placidity. This is what Christ Himself said (xi. 29): "Take My yoke and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls".

The meekness of Christ alone is the sole subject of this testimony of Isaiah, as also *Zech.* ix. 9; *S. Matt.* xxi. 5; *S. John* xii. 15.

Nor cry out.

The Hebrew adds לו ישא "He shall not take away"; but it may be understood, as S. Jerome says, עשה "thou shalt do"; that is, in His judgment He shall have no respect of persons; or it may mean בקלו "His voice," as R. Salom explains it; that is, He shall not cry out.

Verse 20. *Till He send forth judgment unto victory.*

This passage is perhaps more difficult than has been thought. 1. In *Isaiah* we read: "The bruised reed He shall not break, and the smoking flax He shall not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not be sad nor troublesome till He set judgment in the earth, and the islands shall wait for His law":

קנה רצוץ לא ישבור ופשתה כהה לא יכבנה לאמת יוציא משפט: לא יכהה ולא ירוץ עד ישים בארץ משפט ולתורתו איים יחלו.

That is, "He shall walk so quietly and carefully that even if He put His foot upon a bruised reed (than which nothing can be more fragile), He shall not break it, and if upon flax not actually in flames, but only yet smoking, He shall not quench it". It appears that this was a Hebrew proverb to describe the greatest possible softness of tread. By going and walking, the Hebrews understand every action of life. The meaning therefore is, that Christ would in all things show an incredible mildness and gentleness. The Evangelist has passed over the previous words of the Prophet, and only cited these: "Until He shall bring forth judgment unto truth". These words seem in some respects similar to those of the Prophet, yet are not the same. S. Jerome, on this passage of *Isaiah* and in his *Epistle ad Algasiam* (q. 2), thinks that this was caused by the carelessness of the transcriber—an idea which seems hardly probable. All but S. Jerome think that the words of the Evangelist, "Till He send forth judgment unto victory," answer to those of Isaiah, "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth"; that is, when He judges He shall examine all things with truth, and He shall pronounce a true judgment. Why the Evangelist has put ἐκβάλλῃ, "He shall send forth," *ejiciet*, for *proferet*, "He shall bring forth," whilst the LXX. reads εἰσοίσοι, "He shall bring in," is of no great moment.

S. Matthew may have said *proferet*, as in the Prophet, and the Greek translators may have turned it into ἐκβάλλειν, because the Hebrew means this as well. Nor can they be followed who say that the Evangelist did this deliberately and with determination, to add force to the expression, and as if he wished to say that Christ would compel men, even by force, to undergo true judgment. The subject is not the severity but the mildness of Christ.

It is far more difficult to say why the Evangelist said "unto victory" for "unto truth". The opinion that he did not regard the words but the meaning of the Prophet seems by no means sufficient. For the meaning is not the same, and, if it were, the Evangelist is certainly more difficult to be understood than the Prophet. And it is not probable that the former would have explained the dark words of the latter by others of his own still darker. We suspect that S. Matthew could not use the pure and ancient language of the Hebrews, but the corrupt form of it derived from the Chaldaic and Syriac, which was in use in the time of Christ; and that for אמת he said זבית or זבותא which means both truth, purity, innocence, and victory; but that the Greek translator did not write "truth," as it is in *Isaiah*, but "victory," following another signification of the word and changing it. I consulted the Syriac Gospel when I wrote this, and found that I was correct, for the word is לזבותא which may mean "to innocence," "to truth," "to victory".

Verse 21. *And in His name shall the Gentiles hope.*

S. Matthew seems here to differ from the Prophet in two words. 1. For תורתו "in His law," he has put "in His name". All say that the sense is the same. Even if so, I only say what I have noticed on the readings of the Old and New Testaments, that I greatly suspect the Septuagint to be corrupt in this passage. For I do not believe that for בתורתו "His law," they substituted "in His name," as we now read, but that they put *in lege*, as it is in the Hebrew. The similarity of the words may have caused the mistake, and the copyists have written ὄνομα for νόμῳ. I have observed a like error as to these two words in other places also. The Greek translation of S. Matthew therefore followed the Septuagint, and put "name" for "law".

2. Again he differs, because for איים "islands" he reads

"nations". But this is of little consequence. For the Prophet called all very distant nations islands, because islands are distant from the continent, as the poet says, *Et toto divisos orbe Brittannos*, and as in the same Prophet (xlix. 1; li. 5; lx. 9; lxvi. 19).

Verse 22. *Then.*

"When he had gone out of the synagogue," say The Author and Remigius; or no certain fixed time is meant, as Euthymius thinks, although S. Mark (iii. 20) seems to signify that it happened as soon as Christ came out of the synagogue into the house. It must be observed that this is not the same history as the one related by S. Luke (xi. 14), as many have supposed; for S. Matthew wrote of that demoniac, as we have there shown.

Blind and dumb.

It is doubtful whether the man was blind and dumb by nature or disease, as S. Jerome seems to think; or by the malice of the devil, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact hold. But it is more probable that the devil so bound those senses that he could neither see nor hear; for the Evangelist signifies that by the mere casting out of the devil the man recovered his hearing and sight, whereas before there was no cause but the devil to prevent him from hearing and seeing.

Verse 23. *Is not this the son of David?*

Is not this the Messenger so often promised, so long expected, who is believed to be about to come, of the seed of David? (See ix. 1, 2.)

Verse 24. *By Beelzebub.*

As the minister of the devil, by magic art (ix. 34; x. 25).

Verse 27. *Your children.*

Many Moderns think that these exorcists were those

Jews who had some kind of magic art, handed down by King Solomon, as Josephus writes (*Antiq.*, viii. 2), and of whom S. Luke makes mention (*Acts* xix. 13). They are called sons of the Pharisees, because they were Jews, and some of them were their sons. Why do you say that I, rather than your sons, cast out devils by Beelzebub, since we both cast them out? Why do you judge badly of Me and well of them, when we both perform the same act? The Ancients think that their speech was directed against the Apostles (S. Hilary; S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xlii.; The Author, *Hom.* xxix.; S. Jerome; Theophylact; Euthymius). I should very willingly concur, did I not think that Christ intended to convey more than they say; for the Apostles cast out devils in the name of Christ (*S. Luke* x. 17). Our Lord's argument then is, "Your sons"; that is, the Apostles who are of your nation, in whom do they cast them out? Is it not in My name? If, then, they cast out devils, not in the name of Beelzebub, but in Mine, how do you say that I cast them out in the name of Beelzebub? For, if they cast them out in My name, I am greater than the devils; for they are cast out in My name and by My power. I do not cast them out, therefore, in the name of Beelzebub; for, if the Apostles cast them out by My power, which you cannot deny, much more so do I whose the power is.

Therefore, they shall be your judges, because they shall sit upon twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel (xix. 28; S. Jerome). I, however, think the subject to be of another judgment, which divines call the judgment of comparison; for the Apostles would be the judges of the Pharisees, because it will be seen in that last judgment that the Apostles cast out devils in the name of Christ, which, when the Pharisees had seen and believed, yet they said that Christ Himself (whom they ought much more to have believed to have cast them out by His

own power) cast them out by Beelzebub, as He said (verses 41, 42).

Verse 28. *Is the kingdom of God come upon you.*

Christ terms Himself and His advent the kingdom of God, because it was the beginning of it and it opened our way to it (S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact). Christ's meaning is: "If I, by the Spirit of God, as I have before shown, cast out devils, then is that true which I Myself, My Apostles, and you have preached, that the kingdom of God is come unto you; for the Holy Ghost, who works miracles by us, bears witness that our testimony is true".

Verse 29. *Or how can anyone.*

The meaning is easy. How can I dispossess the devil from his possession, that is, cast him out of men, unless I am stronger than he? We call that strong which the Hebrew גבור terms a giant; and the house of the strong is the citadel which is kept by the giant. "The strong" is the devil (*Job.* xli. 24; S. Paul, *Ephes.* vi. 12); the house is the world, in which, before Christ came, the devil ruled, and, as S. Paul signified in the above passage, by his own will. His goods are not, as many think, arms, but spoils and household goods; for he first binds us and then rifles our goods, that is, our household property; and S. Luke (xi. 22) distinguishes between arms and goods. His goods he calls those unhappy souls whom he kept under captivity and whom Christ rescued from him (*Ps.* lxvii. 19; *Ephes.* iv. 8).

Verse 30. *He that is not with Me is against Me.*

We must first ask of whom Christ speaks. S. Hilary (xii.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xlii.), S. Jerome, The Author, Bede, Euthymius, and Theophylact think that He speaks of the devil, as if the meaning were: So far is the devil

from being My friend, and am I from casting out devils in his name, that he is My chief adversary. But the explanation of S. Chrysostom and Theophylact seems preferable, that Christ spoke of the Pharisees. But how much Christ spoke of them is an unsettled question. It would seem that He wished to blame the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who when they pretended that they did not oppose Christ, but only sought the glory of God and the observance of the law, most stubbornly opposed Him. This appears so from verse 33. The Pharisees wished to be judges in the cause of Christ, because the judgment of religion and mercy appertained to them ; and they wished to appear indifferent as if they were neither for Christ nor against Him : yet all the time they were His most especial enemies ; that so they might veil their hatred of Him under the pretence of being good judges. This mask Christ stripped from them ; for "he who is not with Me is against Me". What, then, is the good of dissimulation ? The fault will be less if you openly profess yourselves My enemies. "Either make the tree good," &c. How are the words true : "He that is not with Me is against Me," and "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth" ? or how do they agree with those of S. Luke (ix. 50) : "He that is not against you is for you" ? Some refer this solely to the Pharisees, as if it were not true universally but only of them, but yet has room in others, as S. Luke says in the words spoken above. This does not seem good ; for even if these words of Christ were said only of the Pharisees, it is not true only of them, but of all in whom the same thing is found.

The Pharisees, as professing the knowledge of the Law, ought to have been the first to acknowledge Christ, and to have been with Him ; but he who ought to have been for Him, but was not, was against Him. A king cannot say of those who are not of his kingdom, "He that is not with me is against me," but of his own subjects he can. For

not only he who decries his own king, but he also who does not fight for him when he ought, is guilty of *lese majesty*. All, therefore, who ought to receive Christ, but do not, whether Pharisees or not, are against Him. All ought to do so, and the Jews first. For the Gentiles, who had never seen nor heard of Him, if they were not against Him, were for Him. This is the simple meaning of S. Luke—namely, that those who ought not to be for Him, if they are not against Him, are for Him. For whoever does not persecute Christ, although he have not yet come to Him, yet is not far from the kingdom of heaven, and even seems to have made some steps towards it. Although he of whom Christ speaks in this place was really for Him, because he cast out devils in His name (*S. Luke* ix. 50), yet Christ speaks from the opinion of His disciples, who did not think that he was with them unless he were with them, not only in doctrine, but in bodily presence (*S. Luke* ix. 50). That is, whoever teaches and does the same as you, even though he seem not to be for you, because he does not follow you, is for you, because he confirms your doctrine and your deeds.

Verse 31. *Therefore I say unto you.*

These causal words are not referred to what has gone immediately before, "This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub, the chief of the devils," but to verse 24, as is seen from *S. Mark* iii. 30: "Because they said He hath an unclean spirit".

But the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

That is, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as it is explained in the following verse, and in *S. Mark* iii. 29 and *S. Luke* xii. 10. There arises a great question from these words; so great an one that S. Augustin (*Serm.* xi. *de verb. Dom.*) thinks that there is no greater in Scripture. There are

two parts to the question: (1) What sin against the Holy Ghost is; (2) How it will never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the next.

It is certain that it is not called sin against the Holy Ghost because committed against the person of the Holy Ghost, as S. Augustin lays down clearly. For there could be no greater sin against the Holy Ghost than that of the Eunomians, who denied His Divinity. Yet this was not numbered among the sins against the Holy Ghost, for the Eunomians are received every day when they return to the Church, as S. Chrysostom says; and that for which Christ spoke His sentence of condemnation was spoken, not against the Person of the Holy Ghost, but against that of Christ Himself; for they said that He had an unclean spirit and cast out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. This at least is certain, that sin against the Holy Ghost is not always the heaviest of all sins, nor is unforgiven either in this world or the next because it is greater than the others. For the Sadducees, who denied that there was any Holy Ghost at all, and the Atheists, of whom the world is full to this day, do not sin much more heavily than they who doubted whether the devils are cast out by a good spirit or an evil one. The observation of S. Augustin is also certain, that Christ does not speak here of every sin against the Holy Ghost, but of that only which consists in contumelious words, which, indeed, is the meaning of the word blasphemy. This is explained in verse 32. However, in different places he follows five different opinions.

In one place, he says that sin against the Holy Ghost is what is termed final impenitence, as in lib. ad Petrum iii., *De vera et falsa pœnitentie*, chap. xlv.; *Serm.* xi. *de verb. Dom.*

In another, that they sin against the Holy Ghost who do not believe that sins are forgiven in the Church, but

despise the largeness of the divine bounty, and die in this obstinacy (*Enchirid.*, chap. lxxxiii.).

In a third, whoever through malice and envy oppose brotherly love after receipt of the grace of the Holy Ghost (i., *Serm. in Mont.*).

In another, that it is despair of the mercy of God (*Comment. on Epistle to Romans*).

In another, and one more near the truth, that it is to attribute the works of the Holy Ghost, knowingly, to the devil (*Quæst.* 102 *on Vet. and Nov. Test.*). Hence has arisen the common opinion of those divines who make six kinds of sins against the Holy Ghost: (1) Final impenitence; (2) Despair; (3) Obstinacy in evil; (4) Knowingly to impugn the truth; (5) Presumption; and (6) Hatred (*invidiam*) of brotherly love. The Novatians make this sin denial of Christ; and, to confirm their error, they do not allow those who deny Christ to be received to repentance, as the author of *Quest.* 102 *on Old and New Testaments* tells us. Other Novatians seem to hold all great sin after baptism, such as murder or adultery, to be sin against the Holy Ghost, as S. Augustin (*De Serm. Dom.*) relates. This was also the opinion of Origen and Theognostus before, as S. Athanasius says in his homily on this passage. Others, that it is to deny the Divinity of Christ, as the Pharisees did (S. Hilary, *Can.* xii.; S. Ambrose, vii., *On S. Luke*). Others, that it is to deny that in Baptism, the Eucharist, and other Sacraments of the Church, sins are forgiven by grace of the Holy Ghost, as Bede says on this passage. Others, more generally, that heresy is this sin, as Philaster, on the Heresy of Rethorius. It may be tiresome to recount so many opinions, but in such questions it is perhaps well to know something of what good authorities hold. The true meaning of the words is only to be gained from the passage itself. We see on what occasion Christ said this to the Pharisees. They said that He cast out

devils by Beelzebub, clearly ascribing the manifest works of the Holy Ghost to the devil. This is therefore to sin against the Holy Ghost. We may also observe that Christ does not say, whoever speaks a word against the Father or against the Son, but against the Son of man. From this, we see that He spoke of Himself, not as God, but as man; and that he speaks against the Son of man, who, deceived by His human appearance, offended by His infirmity, thinks and speaks of Him in a manner unworthy of His dignity: such an one deserves pardon, as having some excuse for his sin; but he who ascribes the plain works of the Holy Ghost to the devil does not deserve forgiveness, as having no possible excuse for his sin.

2. From this, the other division of the subject, why sin against the Holy Ghost is never forgiven, is easily comprehended. It is not that it never can be forgiven, for the rule of faith must be kept, that there is no sin which God cannot forgive, nor, therefore, that it never is forgiven; for we may believe that some of those who said that Christ cast out devils by Beelzebub afterwards repented: but that they who sin against the Holy Ghost can have no excuse for their sin, and, therefore, by the nature of the case, cannot merit forgiveness. In most other cases, either ignorance or weakness excuses the fault, if not wholly, at least in some degree (1 *Tim.* i. 13; *Ps.* cii. 14; lxxvii. 39). But in sin against the Holy Ghost nothing of this kind is found to excuse the sin. This is the true explanation (Pacian, *Ep.* i.; S. Athanasius, *Hom.* on this passage; S. Anastasius, *Quæst.* 68; S. Basil, *Interr.* 273 *Reg. Brev.;* S. Ambrose, *De Pœnit.*, ii. 4; S. Jerome, *In Comment.*). Though some of these give different reasons why sin against the Holy Ghost is never forgiven, yet they agree that the sin itself is what we have described. It results, perhaps, in what S. Chrysostom says, that it is said never to be forgiven, because it is very difficult to be forgiven. But their

opinion is better, as said above, that "from the nature of the case it has no excuse, and therefore cannot receive forgiveness". So, in another place, Christ said that it was impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, not that it was impossible to God, but it was so from the nature of the case. But it will be said that "all mortal sin is such as by its own nature it can merit no forgiveness. Why are sins, then, that are not mortal called venial, except that they merit forgiveness? If these are venial because they merit forgiveness, those which are not venial do not merit it." The answer is: "No mortal sin of its own nature merits forgiveness, but others, compared with these, because they have some excuse, are thought worthy of it". This sin alone is specified, because, of its own nature, it never can be forgiven: as there are many others, besides rich men, who by their own strength cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven: but the words above were said of them alone, because they who are loaded and weighed down by riches have so many more hindrances. Hence it follows, that although Christ speaks only of blasphemy, that is, contumelious words, against the Holy Ghost, yet His words hold good not only of blasphemy, but of all other sins whatever, of the same nature; such as if one should ascribe, not in word, but in deed or thought, the miracles of the Holy Ghost to Satan. Many heretics are thus refuted: the Eunomians, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, whom S. Ambrose (*De Spir. Sanct.*, i. 3) answers, "All blasphemy," &c.: the Sabellians, who confused the three Persons in the Godhead; whilst in this passage the Persons of the Son and Holy Ghost are so distinguished that whoever sins against the former shall be forgiven, but whoever sins against the latter shall not. S. Augustin (*De Civitate*, xxi. 24; *Cont. Jul.*, vi. 5), S. Gregory (lib. iv., *Dialog.* 39), Bede on this place, S. Bernard (*Canticles, Sermon* lxvi.), have proved Purgatory

from verse 32, concluding that some sins would be remitted in the future world.

Verse 33. *Either make.*

These words are referred to different things and different persons by different authors.

S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact refer them to Christ so as to make them mean: "Why do you think otherwise of Me and of My works? How, if, as you think, I am a sinner and have an unclean spirit, can I do good works, such as casting out devils, restoring the blind, the deaf and the dumb, raising the dead? Either therefore make Me evil and My works evil, or make Me good and My works good." S. Jerome thinks that they bear reference to the devil, as if Christ should say: "You say that I cast out devils by Beelzebub. How can the devil, an evil tree, bring forth good fruit, such as the casting out of devils? Either therefore," &c. Bede refers them to both: the good tree to Christ, the evil one to the devil, as if it meant: "How can I who am the good tree bring forth evil fruit, that is the works of the devil, who is an evil tree? Either say that I am good and My works good, or that I am evil and My works evil." S. Ambrose (*De Pœn.*, ii. 4) understands by the good tree the Church: by the evil one the synagogue. The evil fruit he considers the Pharisees themselves, as if it were: The evil mother, the synagogue, cannot bring forth good sons. The true sense would appear to be that which S. Augustin has put forth and in more places than one (*De Serm. Dom.*, ii; *De actis cum Felice Mamich.*, chap. 4; *Cont. litt. Petil.*, ii. 6; *Serm.* xii. *de verb. Dom. in Mont.*). He says that the Pharisees are called both the good and the evil tree; for Christ blames their hypocrisy, when they wished to appear the good tree, but brought forth evil fruit; or when they were evil trees, and

wished to bring forth good fruit; and He orders them to be either openly good or openly evil.

This opinion may seem contrary to that in the next verse: "How can you speak good things whereas you are evil?" and also to that in chap. vii. 18; but it is not so if properly understood. For the evil Pharisees are not said here to do good works, or the good ones to do evil works. This is said to be impossible, as above, and in chap. vii. 18: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit," but they are pointed out, because when they are evil they wish both to seem good, and that their works should be approved, as if they were holy and good.

Verse 34. *O generation of vipers.*

(See iii. 7.) Christ does not deny absolutely and entirely that they can do so; for many, though they be evil, speak good words. But He says what is natural, customary, lasting. For it is natural and consistent with the lives of men, that the bad should speak wickedly and the good religiously (*S. Matt.* xii. 34); but if it ever happen otherwise, it happens contrarily to nature and custom, and cannot be enduring.

Verse 36. *Every idle word.*

A Hebrew construction in which the nominative is redundant. Two questions may here be raised: (1) To what end Christ said this? (2) What He means by an idle word? It is most generally thought to be an argument *a minore ad majus*, as if Christ had said: If for every, the least, idle word, how much more shall you give account in the day of judgment for the blasphemy with which you have said that I cast out devils by Beelzebub? That may be called an idle word which brings no profit or edification to the hearer or speaker (S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xliii.; S. Basil, *Reg. Brev.*, xxiii.; S. Ambrose, *Ps.* xxxviii;

Gregory, *Hom.* vi. *in Evangel*; Bede, *Comment.*). Theophylact and Euthymius alone explain it of calumnious and false words, as some more ancient authors did, according to S. Chrysostom. The Hebrews perhaps had שוא which may be taken to mean either a vain, or false, or calumnious saying, as *Exod.* xx. 7, but the Greek translation rendered it "idle," that is, spoken to no purpose, which seems rather to agree with the context; for the Pharisees spoke not only idly, but also calumniously and falsely of Christ. He seems to have said that for calumnious and false accusations account would be given in the day of judgment.

Verse 37. *For by thy words.*

This seems to have been a proverb. Theophylact says that it was a Scripture saying, perhaps that in *Job* xv. 6. But the words, "By thy words thou shalt be condemned," are not to be taken as if our words alone would justify or condemn us; for we shall be either justified or condemned by many other things besides these; but that their words alone will suffice to justify many who have spoken well or ill: as the high priest, who spoke the words against Christ recorded in chap. xxvi. 65. For as he condemned Christ for the one word by which He signified that He was the Son of God without any other testimony, so he himself might be condemned for that one word in which he said that Christ blasphemed, although he had had no other sin at all. No one objects, that infants often die before they can speak, for here the subject is those who could speak well or ill, and who did so accordingly. The meaning is that so exact an account of everything will have to be rendered in the day of judgment, that God will find sufficient cause even in the lightest word to justify or condemn. When, therefore, we are condemned by our words, we are declared by the words we have spoken amiss to be made unrighteous.

For the Pharisees who said that Christ had an unclean spirit, although previously most righteous, were then by that one word alone most unrighteous. When, then, we are justified by our words, we are declared by those words which we have spoken well and holily to have been made righteous (*Rom.* x. 10). Nor does anything but righteousness alone avail to salvation.

Verse 39. *An evil and adulterous generation.*

By a Hebraism a generation here means the race of men; an adulterous generation one which has degenerated from its forefathers.

And a sign shall not be given it.

It has been asked, by all, how Christ says that a sign should not be given, when He afterwards wrought so many miracles. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius answer: They were not done for those who were obstinate, but for those who would gain food by them. Some say that signs were given, but not such as they required; for they sought a sign from heaven (*S. Mark* viii. 11; *S. Luke* xi. 16). That is, as S. Jerome says, they required that fire should come down from heaven, as in the time of Elias; or, as in the days of Samuel, when in summer it thundered, against the nature of the place. Others say, with more propriety, that a sign was not to be given to them, that is, as they asked for and demanded it: for they did it with an evil disposition and with the intention of tempting. This is the reason why God often gave signs at the request of some men—to Ezekiah (*Isa.* xxxviii. 22), to Gedeon (*Judges* vi. 17, 36)—whilst He refused them to others, because the former asked for them from a good motive; the latter from a bad. This is clear, as S. Chrysostom says, even from their very words; for they do not ask, but in a manner require and demand it. "We would see a sign from Thee" (*Volumus a te*).

But the sign of the Prophet Jonas.

S. Hilary alone seems to have understood the true meaning of this passage. I do not think, as the commentators say, that Christ would give no other sign of His Divinity than that, as Jonas, He would rise again the third day. For they who explain it thus are unable to give any reason why, when there were so many signs, Christ should have given that of Jonas rather than any other. He might promise the sign of Elias, who was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire; for He would have proved His Divinity not less by His own ascent into heaven than by His Resurrection. None of the commentators have touched upon this point, and yet it is so necessary, that the passage cannot be understood unless it is explained.

Christ then does not speak of the sign, to persuade as the Pharisees required, but to condemn, and He uses an ambiguity of terms, as we have before observed (x. 39; viii. 22). So He here deludes the Pharisees in the same manner. For, when they sought a sign, to belief, He answered that He would not give them a sign such as they asked, to belief; but He would give them such as they did not ask, to condemnation. This sign was that although the men of Nineveh, who were Gentiles, and barbarous, and with no knowledge of the Law, at one word of Jonas, whilst strangers, and unknown to him, believed and brought forth notable penance: yet the Pharisees, after they had heard so many exhortations, and had seen so many miracles of Christ, not only did not believe, but said that He had a devil. This is the meaning of verse 41. It may seem contrary to this explanation that He immediately added, as if to make what He had said plainer: "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth". By these words Christ wished only to teach that what Jonas was to the Ninevites, He Himself was to

the Jews; but that He was so much greater than Jonas, as it was greater to be raised from the dead, than to be cast up again after having been swallowed by the whale; and yet the men of Nineveh believed Jonas, though the Jews did not believe Him.

Verse 40. *In the heart of the earth.*

Bede and Euthymius understand the tomb, and the followers of Calvin do the same; but with the difference, that the former understand in it a good sense as meaning death; the latter in a bad one, as supporting their denial of the descent of Christ into hell. We hold the words to mean not only the tomb but also hell; whither, as the Church has always taught, Christ went down. We will prove this (1) from the words: for בלב "in the heart" is used by the Hebrews for "in the midst"; because the heart is in the middle of the body (*Ps.* xlv. 3). But hell, not the tomb, is in the middle of the earth. Then why were the words "in the heart of the earth" used of no one but Christ, when so many are laid in the grave, if the grave means this? Why is no one but Christ said to have descended, not only into the tomb, but also into the lower (that is the lowest) parts of the earth? (*Eph.* iv. 9). Except that He descended not only into the tomb in His body, but also into hell in His soul? Lastly, He preached to the spirits in prison; that is, in the middle of the earth (1 *Pet.* iii. 19), which He certainly did not do in the tomb, but in hell.

Three days and three nights.

This appears to some much more difficult than it really is. For we believe that Christ passed not three, but one, or at most two, nights in the grave; for He was buried on the sixth day, and He rose again before the Lord's day, which is called the first day of the week (xxviii. 1; *S. Mark* xvi. 2; *S. John* xx. 1). The universal voice of

antiquity does not satisfy these Moderns. S. Jerome (on this place and in his *Commentary*), S. Augustin (*Ep.* xlix., q. 6), Bede, and Theophylact say that it is by synecdoche, in which a part is put for the whole; for Christ did not lie in the tomb three whole nights nor a part of three whole nights. These Moderns separate the nights from the days, when they should rather unite them. When Christ said days and nights distinctly, He did not do so, as these seem to think, meaning three whole days and three whole nights, but signifying three natural days, and to distinguish them from what they call "usual" days; for the Hebrews by this expression describe the natural day and night, which consist of twenty-four hours (*Gen.* vii. 4, 12; *Exod.* xxiv. 18; xxxiv. 28; *Deut.* ix. 9, 11, 18, 25; x. 10; 1 *Kings* xxx. 12; 3 *Kings* xix. 8). Let us suppose, then, that He said three natural days—no one doubts that this is to be understood by synecdoche, because He was there for some part of three days—*i.e.*, part of the sixth day, all the Sabbath, and part of the first day. As the Jews, therefore, began the day from the evening, the night of the Sabbath is counted into the Lord's day, which is the third day. These three days and three nights, then, mean only three natural days.

Verse 41. *The men of Nineveh.*

Some of the heretics say that because Christ made mention of the sign of Jonas, it came into His mind to speak of the men of Nineveh. How, then, did the Queen of Saba come into His mind, when He had not spōken of Solomon? This is the explanation of the sign of the Prophet Jonas, and because the case of the Queen of Saba resembled it Christ united the two.

Shall rise.

This does not mean, as most, especially Moderns, think, that they should rise to judge. For it is not the office of a

judge to rise, but to sit (xix. 28). But they shall rise to accuse, for accusers do rise. In the same sense we must understand what immediately follows: "and shall condemn it". For they will condemn them, not by judging, but by accusing them. For the accuser is said to condemn the criminal when he has shown his guilt on trial, and the other in consequence is condemned. The Ninevites will accuse and condemn the Jews, not by their words, but by their example; because, when they believed Jonas, the Jews did not believe Christ. They will not rise, therefore, but stand like the rest; for Christ speaks according to the custom of the forum. The Hebrews use the expression "to rise in judgment" in another sense, that is, to stand boldly up in defence of our own cause, as in *Ps.* i. 5, which the Latins call, in one word, "to stand," as Cicero says in his first book of *Epistles:* "Since we stand most honourably in the senate".

Verse 42. *The Queen of the South.*

This is a periphrasis for the Queen of Saba (3 *Kings* x. 1, 4, 10, 13; 2 *Paralip.* ix. 1, 9). Hence it appears that she had a very extensive territory. She was so called, not from the entire extent of the South, but, after the manner of Scripture, from the city in which she had her palace. Christ designed, it would appear, to show the greatness and majesty of this queen. It was also to the point that the power of the Queen of Saba should be plainly described, that so great a potentate might receive the more praise for coming so far to hear the wisdom of Solomon. We may observe the force of the words, and the tacit antithesis between Christ and Solomon: the Jews and the queen. The queen—a woman, a barbarian, but very powerful—came from the ends of the world to hear the wisdom of Solomon—of one who was a mere man, like other men; to hear a merely human and not a divine wisdom, and not to see any miracles, for we do not find

that Solomon performed any. The Jewish Pharisees—men not only learned, but doctors of the law—despised their Lord, the Son of God, when He came to them, and not only poured from His lips the treasures of divine wisdom, but performed before them miracles hitherto unheard of. It is unnecessary to inform the reader that the Saba of which this lady was the queen was not the Saba of which the kings brought gifts of frankincense, but another Saba, in Æthiopia, which Cambyses afterwards called Meroe, from his sister (Josephus, *Antiq.*, ii. 2; Strabo, xvi.).

Verse 43. *But when an unclean spirit.*

S. Luke (xi. 24) relates this earlier than S. Matthew, but the latter seems to have kept the true order of events. Christ said this, as it appears, to show that the Jews were worse than if they had never received the Law and knowledge of God; for when the devil had in some measure been cast out of them, and they had been taught by the Law to serve the one true God, and not idols nor the devil, they despised the grace of God, and merited that seven unclean spirits should enter into them instead of one only. The whole parable tends to this, as S. Hilary, S. Jerome, and Bede explain it.

He walketh through dry places.

Many think this an allegory: as if the dry places were the Gentiles, and all those who had not the knowledge of God, in whom the unclean spirit was not content to dwell, because he had them in bondage already, and therefore sought those who had the knowledge of God, but held it in contempt; preferring to pervert one of these, to ruling as he pleased in the many others. Christ seems to speak of the devil as if he were a man; for men, when driven from their homes, wander hither and thither through lonely and

desert places, seeking rest for themselves, and when they find none convenient, return to their former abodes. These being empty, and prepared and garnished by the new inhabitants, they dwell in them much more commodiously than before they were driven out. This is said in verse 45, which only means that they who were the best, if they are ever corrupted, become, by contempt of divine grace, the worst of all; as if, for one unclean spirit that was in them before they were made good, seven enter into them. Christ said seven after the manner of the Hebrews, who use that number for many—a certain number for an uncertain. In what Christ says of the unclean spirits, He speaks as if they were men, saying that one invites another to a convenient habitation. The devil does not invite the others, to defend himself by their help from being cast out again, as S. Chrysostom and many others think. The result is, that the devil dwells more freely and commodiously in those who were once good and have become evil, because the ornaments of their house—that is, the acknowledgment of the mysteries—their minds cultivated by the knowledge of divine subjects and the like, which had been made ready for God, become subservient to him. Thus the last case is worse than the first. We see this every day. There are no worse heretics than they who, when they were once good Catholics, despised divine grace and the simplicity of the Catholic faith, and, loathing the most pleasant food, sate themselves down by the flesh-pots; that is, losing their faith, they returned into that Egypt whence, through faith, they had gone out, and became heretics, as described in *Psalm* lxxvii. 57.

Verse 46. *Behold His Mother and His brethren.*

Some think the brothers of Christ to have been the sons of Joseph and Mary born after the birth of Christ. This was the heresy of Helvidius, and it was thoroughly confuted

by S. Jerome in a book against it. Others think them the sons of Joseph by a former marriage. Most of the Greeks held this opinion. But it is an idea that should be guarded against. Of the same opinion were S. Hilary and S. Ambrose, who followed Greek authority on many points. The true opinion is that which S. Jerome has most effectually established. The cousins and kindred of Christ were called His brothers, such as James the Less, Joses, Jude, and Simon, as is explained chap. xiii. 55. It appears that James and Joses were the sons of the sister of Mary the Virgin, who was also herself called Mary. For S. John calls Mary the daughter of Cleophas, and wife of Alphæus, the sister of the Mother of the Lord (xix. 25). But S. Matthew (xxvii. 56) and S. Mark (xv. 40) call the same Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses. Cousins and kindred were often called brothers, as can be proved by many examples. For Lot, whom Scripture states to have been the son of Aram, the brother of Abraham, was called the brother of Abraham (*Gen.* xiii. 8); and Laban, though he was the brother of the mother of Jacob (*Gen.* xxviii. 2), is called the brother of Jacob (*Gen.* xxix. 15). In this way those named above are called the brothers of the Lord.

It is a much greater and more difficult question why they came thither, and, at a time by no means opportune, wished to speak to Him when He was addressing the people, and did not hesitate even to send a messenger to call Him out, as S. Mark says (iii. 31). The same Evangelist hints at the reason of their summons; but, so far from answering this question, it raises another and a far more important one. "For they said, He is become mad" (verse 21). The Evangelist does not say that Christ was beside Himself, but only that His brethren said that He was. They did not probably say this of their own minds, but that they might deliver Him from the hands of the Pharisees, of whose plots for His destruction they probably

had a suspicion, as S. Matthew says above (verse 14). For we can easily believe that His kindred were anxious about His safety. For this they came; for this they brought His Mother with them, that they might move Him the more; and they were importunate, fearing that it might be dangerous to wait, lest the Pharisees might lay hands upon Him even in that assembly. Therefore, Tertullian (*De Carne. Christi*), S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact are to be wholly rejected when they say that the relations were moved by some kind of ambition to show that they were His kindred, and had some sort of authority over Him. It was not to be borne that they should involve the Mother of Him who was free from all fault in the same blame.

Stood without.

Some modern heretics unjustly ascribe this to pride, as if they would not deign to enter the house and hear the Word of God with the rest, when S. Luke plainly says they could not enter for the multitude. It is intolerable audacity to judge evilly of the Apostles, not only without Scripture, but contrarily to its express words.

Verse 47. *And one said unto Him.*

S. Mark (iii. 31) says: "They sent unto Him, calling Him". It is, therefore, to be believed that the Apostles sent the person to Christ who told Him that His Mother and brethren were there, when they themselves could not enter. What S. Matthew says, that there was one, and S. Mark and S. Luke, that there were more than one, is easily explained. At first there was only one; then there were many, as usually happens, when they saw that He did not go out to them.

Verse 48. *Who is My Mother?*

We must first hold what S. Epiphanius (*Hær.* xlii.), S. Chrysostom, and S. Hilary have noted on the passage:

that Christ did not say this to deny His Mother; and, according to Marcion, as S. Jerome says, and Manichæus, who misused it, to have it thought that He was born of a phantasma. Why Christ answered so roughly has been asked by many, and all have not given the same answer. S. Jerome thinks that he who brought the message did it with an evil intention, to try whether Christ could be moved by feeling for His Mother and relations, and that He answered him roughly as a spy. But we have proved from *Mark* iii. 30 that the messenger informed Christ of their arrival, not as tempting Him, but in obedience to their commands. S. Epiphanius (*Hær.* xlii.) and S. Chrysostom say that the messenger addressed Christ inopportunely. S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke*, viii.) says better: "Parents are not treated with contumely, but the bonds of the union of minds are taught to be closer than these bodies". S. Hilary writes to the same purpose: "Making Himself the model of acting and feeling to all; the law and the name of all relationships is now to be retained, not from the condition of birth, but from the communion of the Church". S. Ambrose, again, on the same place: "The moral Master who shows Himself the example and the preceptor is Himself the performer of His own commands. For being about to lay it down as a precept that whoever does not forsake father or mother is not worthy of the Son of God, He first submitted Himself to this law: not to overthrow the duty of obedience to maternal holiness (for it was His own law that everyone who honours not his father and mother should die the death), but as He knew that more was due to the mystery of His Father than to the feelings of His Mother."

He wished, therefore, to teach men that each and everyone could be both His brother and His mother. He does not deny parents of the flesh; but He prefers spiritual ones; as *S. Luke* xi. 27, 28, to the woman who said: "Blessed

is the womb that bare Thee and the paps which gave Thee suck," He said: "Yea, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it"; not denying that that womb was blessed, but saying that the mind which heard the Word of God and kept it was more blessed; and not preferring others to His Mother, but mother to mother—the mother who heard the Word of God and kept it, to the Mother who bore Him in her womb and gave Him suck; and the Mother of God was therefore blessed above all women, because, more than all men, she heard the Word of God and believed (*S. Luke* i. 45). In like manner, He here denies neither mother nor brother, nor does He prefer any others to them—but mother to mother and brother to brother. For although His Mother was truly a Virgin in body, and James, Joses, Judas, and Simon were truly His brothers in kinship, yet much more perfectly and with greater merit was she His Mother, and were they His brothers, in mind, because they did the will of His Father who was in heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER—OF THE COCKLE—OF THE MUSTARD SEED, ETC.

Verse 1. *The same day.*

So great multitudes came to Christ in the house that it could not contain them all, and therefore the brethren stood without (xii. 46; *S. Luke* viii. 19). He therefore went to the sea, that He might bring the greatest possible number to Him, as Euthymius says.

Verse 2. *And great multitudes were gathered together.*

The Evangelist relates this to show the reason of the assembly, and of the parables which Christ was about to put forth. Christ put forth these parables, especially that of the Sower, because he saw a great multitude of listeners, among whom, as He knew, and as was probable in itself, were some like the wayside, some like the stony places, some like the thorns, some like the good ground.

So that He went up into a boat and sate.

He went up into a boat, either that He might not be overwhelmed by the multitude and be unable to be heard, or, as S. Chrysostom and Theophylact think, that He might have all His hearers in sight, and attentive to Him.

Verse 3. *In parables.*

"In" (*in parabolis*) is put for "per," according to the Hebrew custom, for in Hebrew "in" means through ב as

in *Aggai* i. 3; ii. 2. They are called parables in Greek, similitudes in Latin, חידות (enigmata) in Hebrew. They are a kind of sermon, in which one thing is said and another meant, and are wrapped up in obscure comparisons. The word is so common among ecclesiastical writers that (as in some of the earlier ages) they call every word a parable. Why Christ pleased to speak not explicitly and openly, but in parable, He will Himself explain in verse 13.

Verse 4. *And while he sowed.*

The rest, to verse 9, will be explained on verse 19.

Verse 9. *He that hath ears.*

(Chap. xi. 15.) An address to the listeners to seek with diligence into the meaning of the parable.

Verse 11. *Because to you it is given.*

The difficult question of Predestination is here raised, on which, at present, only so much shall be said as seems necessary to the understanding of the passages of which we are treating. Two questions may here be asked: 1. Why it was given to the Apostles? 2. Why it was not given to the others? Catholics who follow the teaching of S. Augustin on Predestination say that it was given to the Apostles because they were predestinated, and that it was not given to the others because they were reprobate. For S. Augustin has employed this passage (*De Prædest.*, chaps. viii., xvi.; *De Bon. Perseverant.*, chaps. viii., ix., xi.; *De grat. et Lib. arbit.*, chaps. iv., xliii.; *De corrept. et grat.*, chaps. iv., vi., vii., viii.). I dispute not, as I have said, the opinion of S. Augustin, but his interpretation of this passage I do dispute; and, relying on many grave and learned authors of old, I affirm that the reason of its having been given to the Apostles to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven was, not that they were predestined, nor was the reason

of the same being withheld from others that they were reprobate, but the Apostles were worthy, and the others were unworthy—as S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, The Author, Bede, Theophylact, and Euthymius think.

Finally, not all the Apostles were predestinated. Certainly Judas was not; and yet it was given to all to know these things, for Christ explained the parable to all. All, then, had it not given to them because they were predestinated, as all without the number of the Apostles were not reprobate. Who could believe this? Yet it was denied to all; but it was not denied to them because they were not predestinated. Besides, although it has not been openly explained why it was given to the Apostles, yet it has been explained why it was withheld from the rest: "That seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not". That is, because they would not believe and understand, and were, therefore, unworthy of having these mysteries revealed to them (verse 13). It was given to the Apostles, on the other hand, because they were worthy; for they wished both to understand and believe, for they asked the meaning of them (*S. Mark* iv. 10). Why must we believe that Christ gave it to the one, and withheld it from the others, but that the Apostles subsequently followed His will and example, and gave it to the Gentiles and refused it to the Jews? (*Acts* xiii. 46). Why do we believe that Christ gave it to the one and denied it to the other, except that He said in another place: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof"? (*S. Matt.* xxi. 43). Why was it taken from those, except that they did not bring forth the fruits of it? Why was it given to these, except that it was known that they would bring forth the fruits?

Verse 12. *For he that hath, to him shall be given.*

This was very probably a proverbial expression, because Christ repeats it, in effect, in other places, as in chap.

xxv. 29. The meaning is, that, as most commonly happens, to him who has, more is given, because he is deserving of more; from him who has nothing, even if anything be left to him, it is taken away, because he is not worthy to have it. This is most aptly explained in the parable of the Talents (xxv. 28), where to him who had five talents another five were added, because he employed the first well. By his profit on the five he had deserved the addition; whilst from the other the one talent was taken away, because he had wrapped it in a napkin, and, whilst he derived no gain from it, he showed himself unworthy of having it. This is seen even in our own lives. (*Conf.* xxv. 29, *S. Luke* viii. 18.)

It is not said, "Even that which he hath shall be taken from him," but that which he seemeth to have, or thinks that he has. This has given occasion to the assertion that that which the Jews really had was not taken from them, but only that which they seemed to themselves to have. If this were true, nothing at all would have been taken from them. For that is not really taken away which was never really possessed. But Christ signifies that something was really taken away, or there would have been no punishment. But we see that Christ threatened this to the Jews as a punishment; and the talent which the slothful servant not only seemed to have, but actually had, He commanded to be taken from him and given to another.

Why, then, did Christ say, "What he seemeth to have"? Either because He had said, "From him that hath not shall be taken". And as we might doubt how a thing can be taken from one who has it not, He said not "what he hath," but "what he seemeth to have"; or, as S. Augustin says, because he has it as if he had it not: for, as he does not use it, he is said not to have it, but to seem to have it.

What, then, was taken away from the Jews which they had, because they would not accept the Gospel which was freely offered to them? S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, and The Author answer that nature itself was in a manner taken from them, that is, the natural knowledge of things, because they were blinded so that they could not understand even what Nature herself teaches. For which of the philosophers, if he had seen the numberless miracles of Christ, would not have believed that there was something of the Godhead in Him? To the Apostles, therefore, who already had grace to understand the divine mysteries, and who used it well, more grace, to comprehend mysteries still greater, was given. From those who neither had it, nor would accept it when offered, nature itself was in some manner taken away. From this passage the above opinion on merits can, apparently, be very properly explained. For he who has not the grace of God can merit nothing whatever, except that even some of the natural things themselves should be taken from him. But he who has it, and puts it to good use, the more he has, and the better he uses it, the more he merits and the more he receives; and the more he receives, he is still more worthy of receiving even yet more. Thus the saying of Christ is always true: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath".

Verse 13. *Therefore do I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not.*

That is, They see with their eyes My miracles, the most sure proofs of what I say, and they hear with their ears, and they will neither see nor believe. In punishment, then, of their unbelief, Christ speaks to them darkly, because while they would not understand what was said to them clearly and plainly, they deserved that Christ should so speak to

them that even if they wished they could not understand. Thus does God, by His most just judgment, take away entirely from those who refused His offered Word. He, before all other things, keeps His own Word (vii. 6). So He threatened those who refused to believe so many prophets (*Amos* viii. 11). Why, however, did Christ put forth so many parables to them when He would not have the people understand them? S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xlvi.) most correctly replies that "He would not have them understand that they might understand". For the interest of the listeners is roused, and they diligently enquire when they hear what they do not understand, yet see that it is of great moment and significance. Thus their punishment might have turned out their improvement unless they had abused the punishment itself.

Another question arises from *S. Mark* iv. 12: "That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them". The words "Seeing they may see and not perceive" have been explained by S. Chrysostom. What follows, "Lest at any time their sins should be forgiven them," seems to be explained only by supposing Christ to have been unwilling that they should be converted and saved. In the same manner S. Chrysostom replies.: "Christ so wished the Jews not to be converted nor their sins remitted, as He wished them not to understand what He said". He shut the door of salvation against them, not for ever, but for a time, that they might knock. When, however, it was opened, they would not enter. We strive for that which is forbidden. Christ would not have them converted in some evil manner then, that when they found themselves deserted, they might be converted in a better manner. He would not have their sins remitted to them, then, that oppressed with ills they might acknowledge their debt, and that their sins

might be remitted at a time more profitable for themselves, and with better fruit.

Euthymius speaks on these words of S. Mark in another manner. He does not join the words, "lest they be converted," &c., to those, "I speak to them in parables," as if Christ spoke in parables, lest, when their sins were remitted they should be converted, but he refers them to those others, "that seeing," &c.—that the meaning may be that He wished them not to see and understand, lest they should be converted and their sins be forgiven, as David said of the wicked man (*Ps.* xxxv. 4); that is, lest he should act righteously. The meaning of Isaiah, to whom Christ alludes in these words, shall be explained on verse 15.

However the passage be understood, it is certainly not to be taken to mean that Christ would not have them be converted and their sins forgiven. For those sayings —which to us are not ambiguous, but plain; not obscure, but as clear as the day—ought to remain fixed, that God wills all men to be saved, and no man to perish; that He wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may be converted and live; that the death of the wicked is not of His will; and other sayings of the same kind, almost without number, of which Scripture is full.

Verse 14. *And is fulfilled in them.*

In them is fulfilled what was spoken of the ancient people. "By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand," but in Me, what was spoken of God, "Lord, blind Thou the heart of this people".

By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand.

What is here said in the future tense is put in the imperative mood in the Hebrew. The LXX., however, thinking that, as is often the case, the Hebrew puts the

imperative for the future, so translate it here. The Greek and Latin versions of S. Matthew follow their example. Either agrees well with the context, for (1) if we read the future, it is not what God wills them to do, but what they are going to do themselves; (2) if we read the imperative, the meaning is true and forcible, but more difficult. For it appears as if God commanded them to hear and not to understand. Yet, although in this sense God seems to speak imperatively, He still does not command, nor state what He wills Himself, but what the people, on their part, are determined to do. Christ speaks in the same manner (xxiii. 32). He appears to command what He does not command, but declares that they will do.

Verse 15. *Is grown gross.*

What is here put in the perfect was spoken by Isaiah in the imperative (vi. 9). So with what follows. The Hebrew says, "Make their ears dull of hearing and cover their eyes with darkness," השמן that is, as S. Jerome renders it, blind their eyes. The LXX., who read the same three words with different points, give the same words as those used here by the Evangelist.

The LXX., which either the Evangelist or his translator has here followed, conveys a much better meaning than the Hebrew, because in this God Himself speaks, and not the Prophet. God had not said, "Make fat the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy," for to whom could He have said it? No one but Himself could blind their hearts, or enlighten them. Then, because the heart of the people was now made fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes were darkened, He had said, "Hearing hear and understand not," because He knew that they were so blinded that even if they did hear they would not understand. Thus God does not command, nor the Prophet pray, that they may be blinded, for they were blind

already, but He gives the reason of their not understanding: they were blind. It is needless to enquire here how God is said to blind and harden them. This will be treated of, *Deo adjuvante*, on *Rom.* ix.

Verse 16. *But blessed are your eyes.*

It may be thought that these words are opposed to *S. John* xx. 29. For the Prophets and just men, to whom Christ prefers the Apostles, seem to have been more blessed than they, in that, not seeing, they believed. The answer will be easy if we consider what Christ intends by each example. He says here that the Apostles are more blessed than the Prophets, because, whilst both believed, yet what they believed and wished to see, the Apostles did see, and the Prophets did not; and it was rightly to be placed among their blessings, that it was given to them to see the Son of God, so long expected, and so necessary to the deliverance of men from the tyranny of the devil. For in this sense, Simeon, who was looking for the redemption of Israel, when he took Christ into his arms, said his *Nunc dimittis* (*S. Luke* ii. 29). He prefers those who have not seen, and yet have believed, to others who, measuring their faith by their sight, believe only that which they see.

Some, to harmonise these sayings, explain this passage, not of the eyes of the body but of the mind, as SS. Jerome and Chrysostom; but this is not necessary. Moreover, it cannot be explained only of the eyes of the mind, by which the Prophets and righteous men saw the coming Christ (*S. John* viii. 56), and it is not doubtful that Christ pleased to prefer the Apostles to the Prophets, because what the Prophets had seen afar off, the Apostles saw near; what the Prophets saw obscurely, the Apostles saw clearly; what the Prophets saw by the spirit, the Apostles saw with their eyes, and handled with their hands, as S. John says (1 *John* i. 1, and 2 *S. Peter* i. 18, 19). In this sense, Theophylact and Euthymius explain it.

Verse 17. *Many prophets and just men.*

Christ names the most exalted persons of every class. The above seemed worthy to see Christ, and yet they did not see Him. He thus the more commended the grace and felicity bestowed upon the Apostles. To the same end is S. Luke (x. 24). He, however, to the Apostles adds, not just men, but "kings". Christ, we may believe, specified these three classes of most exalted persons—prophets, just men, and kings, but S. Matthew passed over the kings, and S. Luke the just men. The observation of Hiero and Euthymius, that Christ did not say "all the Prophets," but "many," because some of them saw Him, like Abraham, who rejoiced to see Him and was glad, does not seem much worth; for Christ put "many" for "all" that He might oppose them to the Apostles, who were few (*Rom.* v. 19), and as we see that He did in many other places. For not even Abraham himself saw Christ as the Apostles saw Him.

Verse 18. *You therefore.*

You who have seen what many prophets and just men have wished to see and have not seen, and to hear and have not heard; you to whom it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven when to others it was not given.

Hear you.

Understand now the meaning of the parable as you have now heard the parable itself. S. Mark (iv. 13) signifies that the Apostles had some slight blame from Christ because they had not understood the parable when they first heard it. "Are you ignorant of this parable, and how shall you know all parables?" (*S. Mark* iv. 13); as if He had said: If you do not understand this parable which is the easiest of all parables, how will you understand the others which are more difficult? So in chap. xv. 16. Christ

blames them, therefore, not because it was a matter easy to be understood: for which of us, if he had heard it with no one to explain it, would have understood it? but because when they had been so long with Him, and ought to have been masters through the time spent by them in His company, they need a master in the things which they ought to have explained to others. So *S. John* xiv. 9.

Verse 19. *When anyone* ("*omnis*") *heareth the Word of the Kingdom and understandeth it not.*

Does not conceal it deeply in his mind: does not cherish it: does not meditate upon it; but buries it, as it were, in the soil of his heart. For it is not always a fault not to understand, although it is spoken of here as such. We should, therefore, understand it here as in *Ps.* xl. 1: "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor"—that is, who has a care of him, who cherishes him, protects, nourishes him. *Omnis* is here a *nominativus redundans*, according to the Hebrew idiom.

There cometh the wicked one.

Ὁ πόνηρος, "the devil," as in chap. vi. 13 and elsewhere.

This is he that receiveth seed by the wayside.

These words have given rise to the question as to how one who hears but does not understand can be said to be sowed by the wayside, for it is not he, but the seed, that is sown. For "while he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and some on stony ground" (verse 4). But the question does not appear unusually difficult. Both the seed that is scattered and the field upon which it is scattered, are said to be sown, and hence the fields themselves which are sown are called the seed sown. So that he who hears the Word of the Kingdom and does not understand it is said to be sown by the wayside, not as the seed, but as the field and the ground by the wayside, which are hard and trodden by

the feet of the passers-by. In the same sense verses 20, 22, 23, are to be understood. Christ terms Himself the Sower: the seed the Word of the Gospel: the field the world: the various soils in the same field—some by the wayside, some stony, some covered with thorns, some good—the different manners of men; the devils are birds, who endeavour to prevent the good seed from being cherished in our hearts. They who hear and do not understand He compares to the trodden way, because as the seed which falls by the wayside is covered by no earth, but lies exposed to the birds, so the Word of God, which falls on the ears of the body, but does not sink down into the mind, as if covered by no soil, is easily carried off by the devil.

Verse 20. *Immediately receiveth it with joy.*

Such an one receives the seed, understands, lays it up, covers it with the soil of his heart. This man is opposed to him who, when he hears, does not understand (verse 19). The words "with joy" are used to show the levity of the recipient. For no hearers have less constancy than they who are ardent in the beginning. This class of feeling often comes by practice. They who come quickly, quickly go away, as is said in the verse following.

Verse 21. *Yet hath he not root in himself.*

He has no constancy. He has no deep impression of the Word of God in his mind, because he has not much earth; that is, a strong and, so to say, a deep will. The seeds which have fallen upon him spring up, therefore, at once, because they have not much earth, as in verse 5. For seed which is only covered by the surface of the earth quickly springs up, but also, when the sun grows warm and the root is parched, withers away. That which sinks deeply into the ground grows up late, but lasts long. The cause of both is the same: because it has much earth, which

hinders it from appearing quickly; when it has sprung up, the moisture from beneath supports it.

He is presently scandalised.

That is, he falls, he deserts the faith. There are three kinds of earth mentioned. 1. That which is quite untilled, like the road, and has, so to speak, no soil. 2. That which has a little soil. 3. That which has much and, perhaps, good soil, but is covered with thorns. If it had not these, it would bring forth good fruit.

Verse 22. *He that received the seed.*

(See verse 19.)

Among thorns.

He who receives the seed into a plentiful and rich soil, but one which is full of thorns.

Is he that heareth the Word of God.

Christ meant more than He said. We must understand one who hears and receives, as Christ said before of him who receives the Word with joy. Christ prefers the latter to the former, as if he belonged more nearly to those who bear fruit many fold. The Word springs up in him, but the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke it up, and cause it to bear no fruit. Christ called the care of this world everything that men seek besides the kingdom of God: honour, ambition, business, lawsuits; in a word, whatever impedes men in seeking the kingdom of God. Among these are included riches, and Christ names them expressly because most men pursue them with open zeal. He calls them deceitful, both because they are fugitive and unstable, and because they deceive men. The deceitfulness of riches is a Hebrew expression for deceitful riches, as the body of this death for this mortal body (*Rom.* vii. 24).

Verse 23. *But he that received the seed upon good ground.*

As Christ made a threefold division of those who brought forth no fruit, so, as S. Jerome observes, He distinguishes between the three classes who bring forth fruit, in which are comprehended all men of either class. He calls the good ground that which is not only so by its own nature, but that which is well tilled, well prepared, well dressed. That which fell by the wayside was good, but not cultivated; and that which was choked by thorns was perhaps good, but not dressed. That is called absolutely good which is rich by nature, and well cultivated by diligence. Thus the example fits men better. The nature of men is the same, that is, good *per se*, and their will is good; but some, either by not cultivating it, like that by the wayside, or by not ploughing deeply the rocky soil, or by not dressing it, make it thorny.

And yieldeth the one an hundredfold.

ὁ μὲν ἑκατὸν, ὁ δὲ ἑξήκοντα, ὁ δὲ τριάκοντα. The Greek ordinal nouns, as grammarians call them, are put for distributives, as the sense shows, for Christ desired to say that they brought forth each his own measure, some a hundred each, some fifty, some thirty. The Latin version, for *centenis*, *sexagenis*, *tricenis*, has *centesimum*, *sexagesimum*, *trigesimum*, a form of word not in common use, though some authors, not otherwise inelegant, use them. Christ calls either good works, which are the product of faith and of the Word of God, "fruits" (xxi. 43), or more probably, perhaps, eternal life (2 *Cor.* ix. 6, 10; *Galat.* vi. 7, 8; *James* iii. 18). Two errors of Luther and Calvin are overthrown by these words. 1. They deny that we can merit eternal life; for the fruit answers not only to the quality of the soil, but to the diligence of the cultivator. Nay, each one of us, as S. Augustin says, can make himself a good or a bad soil. 2. They say that the reward of all the blessed

will be equal, when we see some bring forth fruit a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty, as each cultivates his ground. S. Luke (viii. 15) adds: "But that on the good ground are they who, in a good and very good heart, hearing the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit in patience".

Christ did not say that whosover lived holily to Him should therefore suffer persecution (2 *Tim.* iii. 12), as some of these heretics declare; but that "you shall be hated for My name's sake, but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved" (*sup.*, x. 22). For Christ, speaking of the tree and its fruits, alludes to the patience of the husbandman (1 *Cor.* ix. 10). He then wished to contrast the latter with the former, who sprang up immediately, because they had not much earth (verse 5). For the former do not bear fruit; but the latter bear it patiently and long, but at length bear it the more richly on that account.

Some of the Ancients refer the hundredfold to virgins, sixtyfold to widows, thirtyfold to the married, as S. Jerome (*in loc.*, and i., *Against Jovinian*, and *Apology to Pammachius*) and S. Athanasius (*Epistle to Ammus*).

Others refer the hundredfold to the martyrs, the sixtyfold to virgins, the thirtyfold to the married, as S. Augustin (i., *Quests. Evang.*, q. 9).

Others, the hundredfold to the martyrs, the sixtyfold to those who have sold their goods for the sake of Christ and given them to the poor, the thirtyfold to those who are constant in the observance of the Commandments, as The Author (*Hom.* xxxi.).

Others refer the hundredfold to the anchorites, the sixtyfold to the cænobites, the thirtyfold to the married, as Theophylact (*in loc.*).

Verse 24. *The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man.*

Christ desires to show that He Himself has the Gospel, and that one sowed good seed in His field, but some enemy oversowed bad seed.

Verse 25. *But while men were asleep.*

Men—that is, all men—by a Hebraism remarked upon before. Christ sought to teach three things especially in this parable:

1. That there is in the Church not only good seed—that is, good men; but also bad seed—that is, bad men.

2. That He Himself was not the Author of the bad seed, but of the good; that the bad was sowed by the devil.

3. That He would endure the bad seed sowed by the devil with patience even to the harvest, and that it should not be rooted out before.

Verse 26. *And had brought forth fruit.*

It put forth ears—it brought out grains. By this the good and bad corn is distinguished, for the harvest had not yet come. Christ Himself explained this parable in verse 37. He Himself is the Sower; the world is the field. The good seed is the sons of the kingdom—that is, either the good who are heirs of the kingdom of heaven, or the evangelical doctrine which makes them good; the tares are the sons of the wicked one—that is, τοῦ πονήρου, the devil (*vide* verse 19). They are called the sons of the devil, because they follow his works (*S. John* viii. 44, and 1 *S. John* iii. 8). The rest is sufficiently clear. Who they were that slept while the devil sowed the tares, and who were the servants who came and told their lord, and asked if he would have them pull up the tares, Christ does not tell us, probably because they had nothing to do with the meaning of the parable.

There are many additions in the parables, not for the meaning, but for the filling up, of the narrative. These are not any part of the parable itself, but additions, not necessary, but customary. All the early expositors explain the sleepers to be the bishops and those who have the

charge of ruling the Church. Christ, however, no doubt, only intended to show the devil, secretly and when men were off their guard, sowing cockles. The servants who told their lord, and asked him if they should pull up the cockles, were, perhaps, ardent ministers of the Church, who, from their love of Religion, would root out heretics and wicked Catholics from their midst.

Verse 31. *Is like.*

Christ puts out a third parable of the same kind; for as yet He has spoken of the sowing—that is, of the beginning of the Church.

By the first, He spoke of the different effects of the Gospel, as it fell upon a good or a bad soil, when first sown. By the second, how it was vitiated by evil seed sown by the devil. By this third, how great virtue the good seed of the Gospel possesses, from how small a beginning it springs, and to what an admirable size it grows. The kingdom of heaven in this parable, as in the two preceding, signifies beyond doubt the Gospel, or, what is the same thing, faith, evangelical doctrine, the Word of God—as S. Ambrose (*On S. Luke* xiii.), S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* xxxvii.), Bede, S. Augustin (*Serm.* xxxi., xxxiii., *de Sanct.*) all agree. S. Hilary also thinks that Christ Himself is the kingdom of heaven, and the grain of mustard seed. Others, however, think this the Church. They all arrive at the same end. For Christ, the stone cut out without hands, is said to have been made a great mountain (*Dan.* ii. 35), and the Gospel (verse 33) is compared to leaven, because it has a hidden power of increasing; and the Church is often called the moon in Scripture, because in the beginning it is small and thin, and increases day by day till it is full. So the Church in the beginning was small and obscure, beginning at Jerusalem (*S. Luke* xxiv. 47) and always increasing until it filled the whole world. This can truly be

said of Christ, who was to rule (*Ps.* lxxi. 8). S. Augustin refuted the Donatists by no other argument than this. They shut up the whole Church Catholic in one corner of Africa, as the followers of Calvin do now in Geneva. S. Augustin said that it was impossible that, after so many years, the Church could be confined within limits so narrow. "The Church," he said, "is like the moon. If a man do not see the new moon on the first or second day, he may be excused; but he who does not see it when it is full must be blind." This appeals much more to the followers of Calvin now, as I think, than it did to the Donatists of those times. For if the Donatists were called blind by S. Augustin because they could not see the Church four hundred years after Christ, what would he have called the followers of Calvin, who, one thousand five hundred and eighty years afterwards, not only cannot see it, but deny that it can be seen any where at all.

To a grain of mustard seed.

The kingdom of heaven is, no doubt, likened to the mustard seed because, as is said in the following verses, although small in the beginning, it grows to a great size.

Verse 32. *Which is the least, indeed, of all seeds* ("*Quod minimum quidem est omnibus seminibus*").

S. Jerome, or whoever was the translator, made use, not from ignorance, but from certain design, of a solecism. The LXX., as we have said, in their idioms, often did the same, for the Greek words, *μικρότερον πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων*, in the comparative degree, have the force of the superlative. The Greeks often use the comparative for the superlative, as when the Apostles disputed among themselves which was the greater, that is, the greatest. The translator, therefore, renders the comparative by a superlative to express the true meaning, and yet keeps the

construction of the comparative, to show that the Greek has the comparative, and not the superlative. How the grain of mustard seed is said to be the smallest of all seeds, when, among others, the seed of the poppy is still smaller, some commentators, apparently to little purpose, have laboured to explain. For it is not said to be the least of all because it is really the smallest, but because it is one of the least of all. In proverbial sayings, such as this most probably was with the Hebrews, when anything very small is spoken of, it is customary to compare it to a grain of mustard seed. Christ uses this comparison not once only, but often, as chap. xvii. 20, as in such cases we speak not philosophically and with exactness, but in a popular and general sense. For the people think the mustard seed to be the smallest, or, at any rate, one of the smallest of ordinary seeds, as Matthew (v. 26) puts a farthing for the least of all coins. Not that it is actually the least, but one of the least, for a mite is certainly smaller. Therefore, S. Luke, meaning the same thing, did not say farthing, but mite (xii. 59). The birds greatly prefer the seeds, and, in summer, when they are ripe, they come and perch upon the branches to feed upon them. This is the meaning of the words: "The birds come and dwell in the branches thereof". The word dwell is used for perch, or settle (*sedere*), as, on the other hand, settle is often used for "dwell," the Hebrew word ישב meaning both.

The expression may apply to kings and princes, and all who, as S. Paul says (1 *Tim.* ii. 2), are in high places; to signify those who are sustained by the Gospel and the Church, and, as S. Chrysostom says, bear the sign of the cross on their foreheads. For, in *Dan.* iv. 9, the birds which were in that great tree, what were they but the kings and princes who lived, as it were, under the shadow of Nebuchadnezzar? The Church was formerly in the State. The State is now in the Church.

Verse 33. *Another parable.*

Christ sets forth another parable, and of a different kind, but having the same signification—the very great increase, that is, from a small beginning, of the kingdom of heaven. Leaven has many different properties. It is the corruption of a mass too much heated, and, as it has heat in itself, it has the power of increasing that with which it is mixed. Because of the first-named property it is commonly used in a bad sense, as in chap. xvi. 6, and 1 *Cor.* v. 6, 7.

From the second property it is used for good, and the kingdom of heaven is compared to it. As leaven, when small in quantity, if mixed with a mass pervades the whole, and makes it much greater than it was, so the Word of God, sown in one place, pervaded the whole world. So the Church, in the beginning the least of all things, was in a short space of time propagated in all parts of the earth (*Ps.* lxxix. 11).

Which a woman took.

Our Lord's having mentioned a woman rather than a man was only, in all probability, because it was more a woman's work to grind than a man's, though some explain the woman of divine wisdom. The woman, therefore, is either no part of the parable, but is put because women mostly did that particular work, or, if a part, it signifies an Evangelical Doctor, who pours the Word of God into the minds of his hearers, like leaven poured into the mass. We should look, not at the sex, but at the performance.

Hid in three measures of meal.

The Hebrews call a particular liquid measure סאה (*satum*), which, according to Josephus (*Antiq.*, ix. 2) and S. Jerome, held an Italian modium and half. S. Epiphanius tells us that there were three *sata*. The Hebrews say that in the book the measure was increased after the Babylonian captivity משזירות.

Verse 34. *And without parables He did not speak to them.*

That is, there, in that assembly; for both before and after He put forth many other parables (as xx.-xxii., xxv. as S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xlviii.; Euthymius and Theophylact say—*vide* verse 11). S. Mark (iv. 33) adds "according as they were able to bear". Some explain this, adapting themselves to catch the minds of their hearers, in a sense wholly contrary to the intention of Christ, for He spoke to them in parables, not that they might understand better, but that they might not understand at all; as explained on verses 13 and 14. S. Mark's words, "according as they were able to bear," mean only that Christ spoke obscurely, to take whom He could, as He explained Himself in another place when He had put forth a similar parable (xix. 12). Or they may mean what Euthymius says, "as they were worthy; for they were not worthy that Christ should speak to them openly and without parables": as He Himself said (verse 13).

Verse 35. *That it might be fulfilled.*

The word "that" does not signify here the cause of Christ's speaking to them in parables. He did not do so to fulfil the words of David, but because His hearers were unworthy of being spoken to by Him openly; as explained on verses 11, 12, 13. Nor did the Evangelist wish to teach that the prophecy of David was properly fulfilled by Christ; for it was not a prophecy, but a history of past events, of which David spoke.

Nor does the word חידות which David used there signify the kind of parable which Christ put forth here, although the Hebrews call both kinds חידות "parables". The Evangelist here calls expressions which are obscure and shadowed out by similitudes, "parables". When David said (in *Ps.* lxxvii. 2), "I will open my mouth in par-

ables," he called חידה brief and pointed sentences "parables," such as the Greeks call "apothegms".

The Evangelist applied what David said in another sense to a meaning not the same as his, but similar to it; as his custom was (ii. 15-17).

Verse 41. *All scandals.*

Christ calls those through whom offences come scandals, that is, "tares," and "the sons of the devil".

Them that work iniquity.

A Hebraism חידות all who live in the practice of iniquity, and, so to say, make a business of the art of wickedness. The Hebrew expression regards the habit rather than the act.

Verse 42. *Into the furnace of fire.*

The Gehenna of fire (*supra*, verses 22, 29, 30; x. 28; *infra*, xviii. 9).

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(*Supra*, viii. 12.)

Verse 43. *Then.*

When scandals are destroyed, when the cockles are separated which hinder the wheat from appearing, when the chaff which hid the wheat and prevented it from being seen in its splendour has been separated by the fan, as declared in the parable of the threshing-floor (iii. 12; *S. Luke* iii. 17). Splendour here means being glorious as Christ in His Transfiguration (xvii. 2). The blessed, therefore, are compared to the sun, the moon, and the stars (xvii. 2; *Dan.* xii. 3). "They that are learned," that is, those who ruled their lives well and wisely, for Scripture calls these משכילים "having understanding". "These, then," says Daniel, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that instruct many to justice as stars for all eternity." So S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xv. 41, 42).

Verse 44. *Is like.*

Some think that this parable was not spoken to all the listeners, but was put forth to the Apostles alone, in the house; this is concluded from verse 36 (Euthymius, *in loc.*). It would appear more probable that it was spoken with the others above. But as the Apostles asked for an explanation, not of all the others, but only of that of the cockles, after they had returned to the house, it seems probable that the Evangelist, after this one, related how Christ returned to the house, and the Apostles asked for an explanation of it. The same may be said of all the events which follow in this chapter.

So far, in the four parables of the sower, the grain of mustard seed, the good and bad seed, and the leaven, Christ described two peculiarities of the kingdom of heaven—how it takes a different effect upon different persons, and how from a small beginning it gains a great increase. Christ now puts forth its value, to show of how great worth men ought to think it, and with what diligence they should seek it.

The kingdom of heaven in this passage ought to be understood in the same sense as in the preceding parables; that is, as the faith, the Gospel, and the evangelical doctrine—as S. Ambrose (*Serm.* ii. *on Ps.* cxviii.), Euthymius, Theophylact—although some think that Christ is the kingdom of heaven, as S. Irenæus (iv. 43), S. Hilary, S. Athanasius (*Quest.* xliv., if he be the author), S. Jerome (*In Comment.* and *Vigil.* iii. *de Incarn.*). Others, again, say that this kingdom is the Old and New Testaments, as S. Augustin (lib. i., *Quest. Evangel.*, quest. 13), Bede. S. Jerome also approves this opinion.

Unto a treasure.

A thing which cannot be estimated. Of those whose wealth is so great that it cannot be told, we say, "They have a treasure". So S. Paul (1 *Cor.* ii. 9).

Hidden.

Because it was not heard of by the world (*Isa.* lxiv. 4; 1 *Cor.* ii. 7).

Which a man, having found, hid it.

It is not necessary to adapt this to the thing signified by the parable, for, as has been said before, it is not a part of the parable, but an addition; nor is it said to teach anything but to fill up the parable and describe what is done when we find a treasure and cannot immediately remove it; we conceal it lest, before we can procure implements for digging, another come and carry it off. S. Jerome and Bede, however, say that he who finds the kingdom of heaven hides it in his heart; that is, cherishes and preserves it, that it may not escape him. If this mean anything, it only seems to mean that he who finds the kingdom of heaven—that is, the Gospel—ought to be careful that it do not slip from his grasp, and to take all pains to secure it. This is to hide it, not that another may not find it, but that he himself may not lose it. For, although he who finds a treasure hides it, lest another should find it, because if so, he himself would lose it, the parable in that respect is not like the kingdom of heaven, for one does not lose it because another finds it, for it can be equally found and equally possessed by all; although Scripture does sometimes speak as if one could not find it unless another lose it (*Rom.* xi. 19; *Apoc.* iii. 11). This, however, was said in reference to the branches of trees and the crown of kings; for a fresh shoot cannot be grafted into a tree unless the old branch be broken off, nor can anyone seize a crown unless another has lost it.

For joy thereof selleth all that he hath.

This does not mean that the Gospel is to be bought, for Christ says, "Freely have you received, freely give" (x. 8),

but that it is to be estimated so highly, that there is nothing which the man who has found it ought not to do to obtain it, even though all his goods be sold and lost, or infamy endured, or even life itself sacrificed. Christ named goods rather than life, and honour, and anything else, if the man have anything, that He might speak in accordance with the custom of men, who, to gain a treasure, will sell all that they have. In a word, this parable signifies only what is said in another place in other words. In chap. x. 37, Christ names all the most precious things which whoever, when the need arises, does not part from for the kingdom of heaven, is not worthy to gain it.

Verse 45. *The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant.*

The kingdom of heaven is not like the man, but the pearl; as, in the former parable, it was compared not to the man who found it, but to the treasure that was found. The meaning, however, is that the same thing happens in the finding and in the gaining of the kingdom of heaven. If any merchant seeking for pearls find one good one, he goes and sells all that he has, that he may buy it, as explained on chap. xi. 16, 17. We ought to resemble the merchant, and, when we have found the kingdom of heaven, we ought to spare no pains, no expense, nothing whatever, that we may possess it. This parable has the same meaning as the former, the matter only is different. "Good" in the Greek is *κάλους μαργαρίτας* (*pulchras margaritas*), "beautiful," but in this kind of merchandise whatever is beautiful is good (*quæ pulchræ sunt eædem bonæ*).

Pearls.

This is an instance of the species being put for the genus; that is, a pearl is put for every kind of precious stone. The word *margarita*, or *margaritum*, means only that kind of single pearl which is found in shell-fish, and which bears the name of pearl in almost all the languages of Europe.

Verse 47. *Is like.*

The parable seems to be a kind of postil of the former ones of the good seed and the tares. But the Evangelist does not appear to have kept the order of events, because it has the same meaning; and we see that the others which resemble it in this respect are put together, as the parable of the mustard seed and the leaven (verses 31, 33), and the hidden treasure with the pearl. By the kingdom of heaven we may here understand either the Gospel, as in the former parables, or, what amounts to the same thing, the Church. Whichever we understand, we have a strong argument against modern heretics. For, if we understand the Gospel, Christ signifies that not all who receive the Gospel, that is, the faith, will be saved, but they only who are the good fishes, that is, they who have not only faith, but also good works; for all are fishes, that is, all are Christians, all are faithful, but those are evil, these good. Against this, the heresy of the above teaches that all who have faith will be saved.

If by the kingdom of heaven we understand the Church, we will not argue for ourselves, but S. Augustin shall do so for us. He refuted the Donatists by no argument more frequently or more effectually than by that derived from this parable, in which the Church is compared to a net let down into the sea, and filled by every kind of fish flocking into it. It may well be said that, although S. Augustin refuted no class of heretics so completely as the Donatists, yet that he wrote his many works against them, not so much against them as against the followers of Luther and Calvin long after. This is so great a matter, that whoever reads them may substitute for the word Donatists those of the followers of Luther and Calvin.

Verse 52. *Therefore.*

It is not easy to say what was the inference of Christ in the word "therefore". Some explain it thus: "Therefore

(supply) because you have understood, I say to you every scribe," &c. For He had asked the disciples whether they understood all these things, and they had answered "Yes". "Because, therefore, you have understood, I add, every scribe," &c. Others read it thus: "Therefore—supply *rogavi*—I have asked, because every scribe," &c. Euthymius thinks the word "therefore" not causal, but affirmative, as if Christ had said: "So that every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like," &c. The opinion of S. Augustin (*Quests. on S. Matt.*, q. 96) seems the best of all. Christ had compared the kingdom of heaven to a treasure hidden in a field. He had asked the disciples whether they understood. They replied, "Yes". He added "therefore," that is, since the kingdom of heaven is like this treasure, every scribe instructed in it ought to bring out of it things both new and old.

Scribe.

A Doctor instructed in the Law, as explained on chap. ii. 4. Christ calls the Doctor of the Gospel by his legal name, "Scribe". Euthymius says that Christ means Himself, but it is more probably a general expression, by which He describes to the Apostles the duties of a teacher of the Gospel.

Instructed in the kingdom of heaven.

εἰς τὴν βασιλειαν. Some think that εἰς is here put for ἐν, but although these two words are sometimes used for one another, it does not seem so here. It seems more suitable that we should render it "Into the kingdom of heaven"—that is, "*ad regnum*" than "in it"—when we are speaking of those who are instructed in preaching it. Our translator seems to have read ἐν τῃ βασιλειᾳ, unless we say that, in the Latin version, "*In regno*" is wrongly read for "*In regnum*"—but it would then be necessary to prove the fault by the authority of some ancient codex.

Is like to a man that is an householder.

For as it is the duty of every householder to provide his household with food for the body, so it is that of the Doctor of the Gospel to nourish the people of Christ with spiritual food (1 *Cor.* iii. 2).

Out of his treasure.

That is, out of his stores. Christ used the word "treasure" to signify whatever was set aside and concealed.

New things and old.

All kinds of food for the support of his own family, or his invited guests, by one who not niggardly, or sparingly, but liberally, supplies his family with every variety of food, according to their standing and quality.

"To bring out things new and old," though apparently there is no other instance in which the expression is used in Scripture, appears to have been a Hebrew proverb. By this part of the parable, we are taught that a Doctor of the Gospel ought to be furnished with every kind of divine knowledge, every species of example, every manner of similitude, that he may be able to instruct every man according to his capacity. By "new things and old," almost all the ancient Fathers understood the Old Testament and the New (S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Jerome, Bede, Theophylact, Euthymius, *in loc.;* and S. Augustin, *Quests. on S. Matt.*, 17), whom the modern heretics wrongly reject. For as they acknowledge that a teacher of the Gospel ought to be furnished with every kind of learning, whence can they procure it better than from the New and Old Testaments? For these great authorities would not say that Christ desired to point to the Old and New Testaments, of which the latter was not yet in existence; but what Christ had said, generally, of all stores of knowledge, they fitly and prudently applied to the Old and New Testaments.

Verse 54. *And coming into His own country.*

Christ is said to have had three countries (ix. 1)—Bethlehem, in which He was born; Nazareth, in which He was educated; Capernaum, in which He frequently lived. In this passage the Ancients, S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, all recognise Nazareth. This can also be proved from S. Luke (iv. 16). It seems beyond doubt that the same account is given here by S. Matthew, and there by S. Luke. This may be inferred (1) from the fact that the "brothers" of Christ were known to the people of this city by name, as verses 55, 56, show, but they were not so either in Bethlehem, where He was only born, or in Capernaum, where He only stayed for a time; it was at Nazareth that the relatives of the Blessed Virgin and Joseph lived. (2) Because, as S. Chrysostom says, Christ did many miracles in Capernaum (xi. 23). In Bethlehem we find that He did none; in Nazareth, which is here called "His country," He did neither many nor none, but only a few, as appears from verse 58, and *S. Mark* vi. 5. It was therefore Nazareth.

And taught in their synagogues.

In their synagogues. The plural is here put for the singular. For it is not probable that in a small town there were many synagogues. Unless the plural here means that Christ taught in them on successive Sabbaths, so that the word synagogue may have the signification, not of the place of meeting but of the assembly, as ἐκκλησία in Greek, and *Concio* in Latin (*S. Mark* vi. 2; *S. Luke* iv. 16). The whole history is related more fully and distinctly by S. Luke. "He rose up to read," which was the action of one who sought to teach in the synagogue. The book of the Prophet Isaiah was given to Him, in which, when opened, He found the passage lxi. When He had read, He rolled up the book again, and sat down and said, "This day," &c.;

and when He convicted them of unbelief for not receiving Him who was their fellow-citizen and a prophet, they were filled with anger, and thrust Him out of the city, that they might cast Him down from the hill on which the city was built.

How came this man by this wisdom?

They knew that He had not learnt letters (as in *S. John* vii. 15), and it is therefore probable that they ascribed His wisdom and miracles to evil arts. For whilst all the Evangelists say that they wondered at His wisdom and miracles, they add that they were scandalised. But they could not have been so unless they believed that what He said and did He said and did by the aid of the devil, like those who said: "By the prince of devils He casteth out devils" (ix. 34), and: "This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils" (xii. 24).

And these mighty works.

These miracles, that is, for Christ did some miracles before them, as S. Mark relates (vi. 5), and S. Matthew (*infra*, verse 58).

Verse 55. *Is not this the carpenter's son?*

That Joseph was a carpenter is clear from this passage, for Christ was reputed to be his son (*S. Luke* iii. 23). But what kind of carpenter (*faber*) he was is not known, and is not necessary. Some, as SS. Hilary, Ambrose (*On* iii. *S. Luke*), Bede (*On* iii. *S. Mark*), think that he was a blacksmith. Hugo says a goldsmith. Others that he was a worker in masonry. This opinion Hugo appears to approve. Some say that he was a wood carpenter, as S. Chrysostom, cited by S. Thomas (*On S. Mark* i.), and S. Thomas himself in his *Comment. on S. Matt.* i. This is now the general opinion, and is shown to be the most ancient from the book on the *Infancy of Christ*, which,

though apocryphal, related a miracle wrought by Christ in the wood-carpenter's shop of Joseph, and from Sozomen (vi. 2), who relates how a Christian, when asked derisively by a Gentile what the Son of the carpenter was making, replied: "A bier for the Emperor Julian". The Author (*Hom.* xxxii.) and S. Mark (vi. 3) say that Christ Himself was called the carpenter, whether because the people of Nazareth called both father and son by this name, or that, from the usual form of speech, the son of a carpenter was also called a carpenter; so that the assertion of some authors of credit, that Christ before He began to preach practised the trade of a carpenter, seems very probable to myself, as it did to De Lyra. For what did He do all those thirty years at Nazareth? although S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 42) says that He was called a carpenter because, as He was reputed to be the son of a carpenter, He was thought to have been one Himself.

And His brethren.

This has been explained, *supra*, chap. xii. 46.

Verse 57. *And they were scandalised in His regard.*

They struck against Him as against a rock, and fell. For this is the proper meaning of scandalised. He was "set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted" (*S. Luke* ii. 34; and see 1 *Pet.* ii. 8, and *supra*, verse 54). How they were scandalised has been explained on verse 54.

Verse 58. *And He wrought not many miracles there.*

When it is said that He did not many, it implies that He did some, as stated by S. Mark (vi. 5). It says that He could not, not as being unable, but unwilling, as we often say when we do not choose to do a thing, and as was said of the sons of Jacob (*Gen.* xxxvii. 4), that is, *nolebant*, "they would not," and as S. Gregory Nazianzen has rightly observed (*Orat.* iv. *de Theol.*).

Christ would not work miracles among them because of their unbelief. Whether because He knew that they would not believe even if they saw the miracles, like the Pharaos, or that they were unworthy of more, when they understood so wickedly those which they had seen, ascribing them to Beelzebub. We see that Christ, when about to work a miracle, first required faith in those for whom He was about to work it (as in ix. 28; *S. Mark* v. 36; ix. 23; *S. Luke* viii. 50). For the faith which follows miracles has less merit than the faith which goes before them; and he who sees miracles is unworthy if he only believe from seeing them. Besides, Christ does not work miracles before the unbelieving. The same is the reason why, even in these days, they who most wish to see miracles see them least; because they desire to see them, not believing, but doubting of the faith.

Thus Herod, who, as S. Luke relates (xxiii. 8), wished for a long time to see some miracle from Christ, was not able to see one, as S. Gregory (*Moral.*, x. 17) has observed. So, when the Pharisees demanded to see a sign from Christ, He answered them: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet" (*supra*, chap. xii. 39). Let those, then, who require miracles, and who wonder if they are not done, take heed lest this be their own fault, and if they wish to see miracles, let them believe without miracles.

CHAPTER XIV.

HEROD PUTS JOHN TO DEATH—CHRIST FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND IN THE DESERT—HE WALKS UPON THE SEA, AND HEALS ALL THE DISEASED WITH THE TOUCH OF HIS GARMENT.

Verse 1. *At that time.*

SOME think that this refers to the time when the Apostles were employed on their mission, because S. Mark (vi. 14) and S. Luke (ix. 7) put the whole history immediately after their mission. Against this view is the fact, that when these events happened, the Apostles were with Christ, as we see in verse 15. As S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 45) thinks, therefore, the Apostles had now returned to Christ.

Heard.

Many ask how it happened that Herod had not heard of that before? S. Chrysostom and Theophylact answer that what is holy and good is long in reaching the ears of princes. This, indeed, is true; but if there were any appearance of strangeness, or any danger of causing tumults, such as might have been the case with Christ's miracles, curiosity, surely, and ambition, if not religion, would soon bring them to notice. There seems, indeed, another reason why Herod had not yet heard of them, viz., the death of John, which happened not long after Christ began to preach. For when he was cast into prison, not even his disciples appear to have seen or even heard of the miracles of Christ; and, therefore, when Christ worked some miracles in their presence, He said to them: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen" (xi. 4).

Herod.

Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, in whose reign Christ was born, and who slew the infants (*vid.* ii. 22).

The tetrarch.

Of Galilee (*S. Luke* iii. 1). When the kingdom was divided into four parts, and a ruler was placed over each part, the four portions were called tetrarchies, and the rulers were styled by the Greeks "tetrarchs". It happened, afterwards, that although there might be more or fewer parts, they were called by the same name of tetrarchies, as we may learn from Strabo (bk. xii.) and Pliny (v. 18, 21). How the kingdom of the Jews was divided into tetrarchies, and into how many, and what tetrarch was placed over each, has been explained on *S. Mark* vi. 14. S. Mark calls Herod a king, as below, verse 9; not that he was really such, but because the tetrarchs practised a regal, or all but regal sway. Cicero and Pliny call the tetrarchies kingdoms, as S. Matthew calls Archelaus a king, though he never really was one.

Verse 2. *And he said to his servants.*

Herod's servants; for although the Greek word *παῖς* may mean both a son or a servant, we do not read that Herod had sons. S. Luke (ix. 7, 8, 9) says that it was not Herod who said this, but others said it to him. There are, therefore, two points here on which S. Luke seems to differ from S. Matthew. 1. He says that it was not Herod, but others, who said that John had risen from the dead. 2. He seems to signify that Herod did not believe that it was John, as he had beheaded him, but here (verse 2) Herod says, "This is John". S. Chrysostom and Euthymius, to solve the apparent difficulty, consider that it was not Herod, but people generally, who said that John had risen, and that Herod did not believe, but hesitated, and said, as

S. Luke relates, "Who is this?" *Quis est?* (ix. 9). But that afterwards he did believe, and said, as if in assent to the rest, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in him," as Theophylact seems to hint, and S. Augustin proves (*De Consens.*, ii. 43).

An argument for this view may be deduced from the fact that, as Euthymius says, he did not venture to say this openly and before others, although he believed that John had risen from the dead. For it might be that, although he believed, he would feign not to do so, lest he should appear to assent to the popular mind, and confirm the zeal towards John. S. Augustin says that the words of S. Matthew may be taken as a question. If so, they would have the same meaning as those of S. Luke.

He is risen from the dead.

Some think that Herod meant not the true resurrection, when the soul returns to the same body, but that of the Pharisees, in which the soul, having gone out of one body, passes into another. These think that this was a heresy of the Pharisees, and that they believed the Pythagoræan doctrine of metempsychosis. They support the idea by Josephus (*De Bell. Jud.*, ii. 7); and S. Jerome says that some support the Pythagoræan doctrine by this passage.

But it does not seem probable that this kind of resurrection was intended. Nor does Josephus appear to ascribe this doctrine to the Pharisees, but that which almost all the Jews held: that the souls, not of all men, but only of the good, would return in the resurrection to their own bodies, indeed, but to bodies made better, and, therefore, in some respects different ones.

The Jews easily believed that John had risen, because he was a holy man, and had been unjustly put to death, that he might reverse the wickedness of Herod.

They mentioned Elias, according to ancient opinion, which Christ seems in some measure to have approved (xi. 14), and with which they seem to have been filled from Malachi (iv. 5). Because Elias did not die, but was taken up, they say that he was not dead, but had appeared (xvi. 14). The same thing is said of Christ.

Jeremiah is also named (xvi. 14), perhaps because of the resemblance in spirit between him and Christ in denunciations, which they saw practised in a singular degree by Christ, but very moderately by other teachers (vii. 29).

Therefore.

It is doubtful what reason Herod could give why John, when risen from the dead, should be believed to have worked miracles, when in his life, as S. John says (x. 41), he did no sign. Perhaps it was because they thought that men rose more holy than they died, or because he was sent by God, with greater power to punish Herod; for the wars, exile, and other calamities which Herod afterwards underwent were thought by the Jews to have happened because of John's death, as Josephus affirms (*Antiq.*, xviii. 10).

Show forth themselves in him.

Ἐνεργοῦσι. Some think that *ἐνεργεῖν* is used in a passive sense, as *ἀσκεῖν* for *ἀσκεῖσθαι*, and *lavare* for *lavari* in Latin; that the meaning may be that powers were done in him *in illo*, that is, by Hebrew idiom, through him. Others take it actively, but would have *virtutes*, "mighty acts," to mean not actual miracles, but the faculty of working miracles; as if it had been said: "The gift of working miracles works miracles in him".

Others, in a far-fetched manner, say that the *virtutes*, "mighty acts," are angels who worked miracles in John.

The matter does not seem to be one of much difficulty. *ἐνεργεῖν* does not appear to be used here either as a passive or transitive but as a neutral verb, and means the same as

vigere among the Latins, which the philosophers call to be active (*in actu esse*), and as Aristotle uses it, τὸ ἐνεργεῖν being opposed to τῷ ἐν δυνάμει εἶναι, meaning that John being raised from the dead, miracles therefore flourished, appeared, showed themselves in him.

Verse 3. *Because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.*

There is a great difference of statement between the Evangelists here and Josephus (*Antiq.*, xviii. 6, 7, 9), which S. Jerome and other ancient interpreters have passed by, and which few of the Moderns, even though citing Josephus, have touched upon.

1. The Evangelists say that Herodias was the wife of Philip. 2. Josephus that she was the wife of another Herod, brother of this one.

Some answer that Philip was also called Herod by surname; the Evangelists calling him by his name, Josephus by his surname. If they could prove this, the answer would be very easy.

Others say that Josephus erred through ignorance or forgetfulness, as they say he often did. The reader can choose which of these solutions he prefers. But Josephus should be corrected from the events, not they from him. For supposing for a moment that the Evangelists composed their histories not from a divine but a human source, yet, as they are more in number, and they describe what happened in their own times, they deserve belief much more than Josephus.

There is another disagreement between the authorities about Herodias. Josephus makes her the daughter of Herod Aristobulus, the brother of Philip, son of Herod the Great. S. Jerome, on this place, and Ruffinus, in his version of Eusebius (i. 23), Bede, and Strabus, say that she was the daughter of King Aretas. There is no doubt that Ruffinus originated this statement. Then S. Jerome fol-

lowed Ruffinus: Bede and Strabus followed S. Jerome, and so erred. For when Eusebius, following Josephus, said that Herod's first wife was the daughter of King Aretas, Ruffinus, thinking that he was speaking of Herod's second wife Herodias, and not consulting Josephus and Hegesippus, added the name of Herodias in his version in explanation, and, while endeavouring to explain the history, falsified it. S. Jerome, trusting to the Latin of Ruffinus, drew his statement from a corrupt source, and others followed him.

S. Jerome, Bede, and Strabus are by no means to be followed when they say that Herod himself did not seize his brother's wife, but that Aretas, the King of Arabia, on account of the enmity he bore King Philip, took away Herodias, whom he had given to him in marriage, and gave her to his brother and rival. Josephus (xviii. 9), Hegesippus (ii. 12), relate the history thus: When Herod went to Rome, he was received as a guest by his brother Herod (Philip, according to the Evangelists), and while staying there he suborned Herodias to leave his brother when he should have returned from Rome, and be married to him, and that the marriage was then agreed to between them.

It is not really doubtful, therefore (though many have treated it as if it were), that, while Philip was still alive, Herod took his wife.

The Ancients, however, disagree among themselves on the subject. For S. Jerome, Bede, and Strabus think that Philip was yet alive. But Tertullian (lib. iv., *Against Marcion*), S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Enthymius, on this passage, think that he was dead; and S. Augustin (xix., *De Fid.*) and Optatus consider it doubtful. But they had not, perhaps, read Josephus.

Verse 4. *For John said to him.*

Josephus gives another reason (*Antiq.*, xviii. 10) why Herod put John to death. He was in great fear lest, as

John was in high favour with the people, he might raise a sedition against him. It is probable that both reasons were true. (1) That Herod killed him, through the treachery of Herodias, and at her desire, as the Evangelists write. And (2) that to appease the people, he disseminated a rumour that John had endeavoured to raise an insurrection against him; this was followed by Josephus.

Verse 5. *And having a mind to put him to death.*

S. Mark (vi. 19, 20) seems to signify quite the contrary, that Herodias laid snares against the life of John; but Herod, because he feared John, thwarted them (*S. Mark*, as above). It is conjectured from this that Herod did not cast John into prison to put him to death, but rather to protect him against the attempts of Herodias, thus appeasing the rage of an impotent woman, and deluding her with the hope of the death of the victim. Euthymius says that it is credible that in the beginning Herodias alone plotted against John; that either through her husband, or by some other means, she meant to have him put to death; that, as S. Mark signifies, Herod opposed her, but that, overcome by her prayers, he subsequently assented to his destruction; but that he feared the people who considered him a prophet, as S. Matthew says.

Verse 6. *But on Herod's birthday.*

Origen (*Hom.* xiv. *on S. Matt.*), S. Jerome, and Bede have observed that the birthday of no good man is mentioned in Scripture, and only those of the two wicked ones, Herod and Pharao.

The daughter danced.

Salome, the daughter of Philip, her former husband, and therefore not called the daughter of Herod, but of Herodias. Herodias seems to have celebrated this as the birthday of Herod, and therefore to have introduced her daughter to dance.

Verse 8. *Being instructed.*

Induced, instigated, impelled, not by admonition alone, as the Greek word προβιβασθεῖσα means persuasion, incitement, even some amount of compulsion. Strabus thinks that this was a scene got up by Herod that he might appear to have put John to death, not of his own will, but under the sacred obligation of an oath. Although Herod was perverse and crafty, this hardly seems probable, for such a man might have devised much better schemes; and, as the following verse shows, he seems to have truly grieved at the request of the damsel for the head of John. It was most shameful to put a holy man to death to please a dancing girl; nor is it likely that he, who was cautious and feared the people, and who was seeking means to lessen his crimes, would willingly have increased them by a fresh piece of wickedness.

Give me.

S. Mark (vi. 24, 25) adds: "Who, when she was gone out, said to her mother, What shall I ask? But she said, The head of John the Baptist. And when she was come in immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying, I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist."

Verse 9. *And the king was struck sad.*

S. Hilary, S. Jerome, and Strabus think that Herod's was not a true but only a simulated sorrow, because (verse 5) the Evangelist said that he had a mind to put him to death, but feared the people. How, then, could he have been truly sorry if he wished for his death? The opinion of S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact seems better, who think that his grief was real; for, although he wished to put John to death, he could see, blind as he was, that it would be a shame and disgrace to

him in the eyes of the people to take the life of a man so great and so holy, and of a prophet so revered, to please a meretricious dancing girl. And as the Evangelist says that Herod was grieved, we ought not, without proof, to think his grief assumed. He grieved, not in pretence, but truly; not that John was killed, for he desired his death, but that he had put him to death in a manner that did not suit his designs.

Yet because of his oath.

And this, too, was probably not pretence; for the Jews had such a respect for an oath that not to keep one, even though it were against the right, they thought wicked, as in the case of Joshua and the Gibeonites (*Josh.* ix. 15, 18, 19) and of Jephte (*Judges* xi. 35). The ancient Fathers have rightly held that such oaths as these ought not to be kept (Origen, *Hom. on S. Matt.* xiv; S. Chrysostom, *hoc. loc.;* S. Ambrose, i. 50, *De Officiis;* S. Jerome, *In Comment.*). Euthymius proves this by the example of David (1 *Kings* xxv. 22), who, after he had sworn that he would not leave one man of the house of Nabal till morning, when admonished of his oath being unjust, and entreated by Abigail not to keep it, not only listened to her, but also returned thanks to God he had been persuaded to disregard it (verses 32, 33).

Verse 10. *And he sent.*

An executioner (ii. 16). S. Mark (vi. 27) said in explanation: "But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish". It is concluded from this passage that this feast was held in the citadel of Macheruntia, which was on the confines of Galilee and Arabia, and in which Josephus says that John was bound (*Antiq.*, xviii. 10). It appears, however, from this place, and much more from S. Mark, that the festival was celebrated in the place in which John had been imprisoned.

Verse 12. *And his disciples came.*

We may ask how the disciples of John were able to gain entrance into the prison. Some think that his body was cast out with ignominy, but this can by no means be proved. Others, that they had leave of entrance to the prison; for it is plain, from chap. xi. 2, that while he was yet alive they visited him. This is more probable, for it may be easily supposed that the body would readily be given up to the disciples at their request, from some pretended regard to humanity; for Herod wished thus to conciliate the feelings of the people, whom, as the Evangelist says, he feared.

Verse 13. *Which when Jesus had heard.*

Authorities are not agreed what it was that Jesus heard, from which He went thither. S. Augustin (*De Consens.*, ii. 45), Euthymius, and Theophylact refer it to the death of John. But S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* l.), which Euthymius adopts, takes it to apply to the words of Herod in *S. Luke* ix. 9: "This is John the Baptist," when he sought to see Christ. The opinion of S. Augustin appears more probable, for in this passage the relative "which" cannot possibly apply to anything but the death of John, of which his disciples had informed Christ (verse 12). For John had now been a long time in prison, but had not been put to death.

He retired from thence.

Why? This is certain at least, as SS. Jerome and Chrysostom observe, that it was not from fear, but from plan and design. But with what design we do not know. S. Jerome and Bede think that He did it that the tyrant might not add murder to murder; as if he would kill Christ also, if he could lay hands on Him. Christ would not supply Herod with the means of sinning, and therefore went away, doing what He had commanded His disciples

to do (x. 23). But S. Chrysostom and Euthymius offer another reason, lest if (as He was able to do) He supernaturally escaped the hands of Herod, He should show Himself to be God, which He would not have to be known as yet. Theophylact suggests another still, that by flying He might show Himself not to be a phantasm, as the Marcionists and Manichæans supposed, but very man, who might be seized and put to death. The true reason may have been that which S. John gives in a similar case (vii. 6): "My time is not yet come".

S. Mark gives still another reason (vi. 31),—"Come apart into a desert place, and rest a little. For there were many coming and going, and they had not so much as time to eat,"—that the disciples had returned wearied from their mission, and needed rest, which they could not have in this place, where they had no time, on account of the multitude, even to eat.

By a boat.

Why not on foot? Lest, says S. Chrysostom, the multitudes whom He wished to escape should follow Him. Others say, because the lake was to be passed to the further side. This seems in no degree probable, because S. Luke (ix. 10) says in plain terms that He went aside into a desert place which belonged to Bethsaida. Bethsaida was on this side of the lake, not the other; that is, in Galilee, the tetrarchy of Herod, where Christ was then living. For Peter also, who was of the city of Bethsaida (*S. John* i. 44), was a Galilean (*S. Matt.* xxvi. 71, 73). Christ, therefore, did not cross the lake, but only some gulf, or, rather, sailed round some promontory of it, that He might seek some remote place. Beside the above passage of S. Luke, a certain proof of this suggestion is found in the words of S. Matthew, that the multitudes followed Him on foot. Christ only passed over a part of the lake, or round some promontory, and the people followed on foot,

and got there before Him (*S. Mark* vi. 33). They got there first, because, although a journey by the sea would ordinarily be quicker, Christ had to go round the promontory, whilst, as S. Matthew says, the multitude took the direct course.

Verse 14. *And He, coming forth, saw a great multitude.*

Coming forth out of the ship, because, as S. Mark says, the multitude had got there before Him. S. Jerome, Euthymius, and many Moderns say that He went out from the desert, because S. Luke (ix. 11) says, "He received them," as if He went out to meet them; and S. John (vi. 3): "Jesus, therefore, went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples"; His going out to them does not seem probable, as S. Mark (vi. 33) plainly says that the multitude "were there before Him". For the words of S. Luke (ix. 11), "He received them," do not mean that He went to meet them. This S. Mark has explained on verse 34 and following.

Verse 15. *His disciples came to Him.*

Leontius refers the word "his" to John's disciples, who had recently come to Christ from John, as if it were they who asked Christ to send the multitudes away. "It is clear from this," he says, "that the disciples of John now, after his martyrdom, joined themselves to Christ." But S. Luke (ix. 12) shows plainly that the speakers were the twelve Apostles. S. John (vi. 5) seems to give another relation of the matter, for he says that "Christ said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"

It is easy to suppose that the disciples first suggested to Christ to send the multitudes away, as S. Matthew says; and then that Christ, as S. John relates, asked Philip, "to try him," "whence shall we buy bread, that these may

eat?" as S. Chrysostom, Leontius, and Theophylact explain it.

But there are two questions in the words of S. John: (1) Why Christ asked the question, and (2) why He asked Philip rather than any of the others.

To the first S. John himself seems to give the answer. He did not ask to learn, "for He Himself knew what he would do," but "to try him". But it is asked: Why He should wish to try him? Amphilochius thinks that though in no way ignorant Himself, Christ asked in the manner of one who was so, to accommodate Himself to the opinions and infirmities of His hearers. S. Augustin, Bede, and Rupertus, not that He Himself might learn the faith of His disciple, of which He could not be ignorant, but that He might show him his own unbelief. S. Cyril thinks that He did it the more to show the greatness of the miracle He was about to perform. For from his question followed Philip's answer: that two hundred pennyworth of bread was not sufficient that everyone may take a little; and Andrew's, of the five loaves and two fishes; for, as many more loaves as Philip and Andrew declared to be required, so much the greater would the miracle appear afterwards. S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Ammonius, Theodore Heracleotes, and Theodore of Mopsuestia say that Christ wished, by asking and answering alternately, to arouse the faith of the disciples, and make them more attentive to observe the greatness of the coming miracle. For if, without such a discussion with the disciples, He had suddenly worked the miracle, it would have been less noted; as both the number of persons, the hunger, and the paucity of the loaves would have been observed less than it was by the discussion.

2. To the latter question S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Leontius answer that Christ asked Philip rather than any of the others because he most of

all wanted faith; for it was he who said: "Show us the Father, and it is enough for us" (*S. John* xiv. 8). S. John adds that "Andrew the brother of Peter said: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?" This, in the opinion of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Leontius, and Ammonius, was said that Andrew might not seem to wish to reserve anything for himself; but S. Chrysostom, S. Cyril, Theodore Heracleotes, Leontius, and Theophylact say that Andrew showed somewhat more faith than Philip; for he spoke this, it appears, with some hope of a future miracle, knowing that Eliseus had multiplied bread; but that he had not perfect faith when he said: "But what are these?" as if he believed that Christ could indeed multiply the loaves, but could only make more of more, and fewer of fewer.

It may appear more likely that Andrew, when he said this, had no thought of a miracle.

Christ teaches us by this example, as Leontius and Theodore of Mopsuestia say, never to despair in difficulties, but always to trust in Him who is able to increase our bread, if we have any, and, if we have none, to create it out of nothing. But S. Chrysostom and Theophylact refute the Manichæans from this passage, who senselessly assert that bread is created by some evil deity. For Christ could not have multiplied the loaves had they been created by any other than His Father or Himself. Euthymius has observed that Christ prolonged this discourse to a late hour of the day, that the need of the miracle which He was about to perform might be known.

Verse 16. *Give you them to eat.*

S. John (vi. 7) says that Philip replied: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone may take a little".

From this some of the heretical commentators conclude

that Christ and the Apostles, having two hundred pence, had almost twenty gold crowns. Who does not see that Philip said two hundred pennyworth, because he neither had them, nor could possibly obtain them? He argues that he could not feed such a multitude for whom even two hundred pence would not suffice, when he perhaps did not possess a single penny. For if they had had them Christ might have commanded that they should be expended in purchasing bread, and then the miracle would not have been needed. How much better Theodore Heracleotes proves from this passage the voluntary poverty of Christ and His disciples, who had not enough even to purchase the food required for their subsistence. His words are as follows: "His followers display indifference to wealth and voluntary poverty, not having sufficient to purchase even necessary provisions".

Leontius observes that Christ did not say, "I will give them food," but "Give you them to eat," lest He should speak proudly of Himself and appear to boast of the miracle.

Verse 17. *We have nothing here but five loaves.*

S. John (vi. 8, 9) says: "One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Peter, saith to Him, There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?"

The commentators doubt whether the loaves were the property of the Apostles, carried for them by the boy, or whether he brought them for sale. S. Chrysostom (*Hom.* l.), Leontius, S. Cyril, and Theophylact think that they were the Apostles'. Euthymius and, it seems, S. Cyril, whose opinions seem more trustworthy, that they were for sale. For the words of the Apostles do not imply that they were their own, but that the whole number of people, more or less, had only five loaves and two fishes.

Verse 18. *He said to them, Bring them hither to Me.*

Christ said this, say S. Chrysostom and Leontius, to show that it was He who fed the whole world; that He did not depend on any hour or season, but that at any time and from any material He could make as many loaves as He pleased. The Evangelist does not say that the Apostles obeyed Him, but it is understood from what follows. Hence S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, S. Cyril, and Leontius say that a great lesson is here taught us to give freely to guests, and also to the poor, of the things that are necessary for us, for in this manner it will happen that our bread shall increase.

Verse 19. *And when He had commanded the multitude to sit down.*

(*S. Mark* vi. 39.) For there was plenty of grass, because, as Leontius and Theophylact have observed, it was early spring, when the Passover was near, as S. John says (vi. 4; *vid. S. Luke* ix. 14). Christ probably did this for many reasons. 1. That the number of people might be seen, and the greatness of the miracle appear more clearly. 2. That the Apostles might give of the loaves and fishes without confusion. 3. That no one might be passed over, but that all might receive their portion, each in his order.

Looking up to heaven.

To show that He had received from His Father with His Divinity the power of working miracles (S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact). To teach us to do the same thing; as the same authorities and Leontius and Ammonius say. To show us to whom we should look for help in all difficulties (S. Jerome and Bede). To show that He is not opposed to God (Ammonius and Leontius). That even to His Passion, as man praying to God, He might conceal that He was the Prince of this world. This

reason is given by Ammonius alone. Leontius gives another reason. That He might not appear to make Himself greater than His Father, of whom the Jews said in the wilderness (*Ps.* lxxvii. 19): "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"

It has been shown, however, by S. Chrysostom, Leontius, and Euthymius that Christ did not look up to heaven every time He worked a miracle, but sometimes, as here, and at the resurrection of Lazarus (*S. John* xi. 41), and in His prayer to His Father (xvii. 1); lest, if He always did so, He might appear to work them not by His own authority, but by some other; if He never did so, He might seem not to acknowledge His Father's authority.

He blessed.

The followers of Calvin explain this to mean He gave thanks; because, like S. Matthew, S. Mark (vi. 41) and S. Luke (ix. 16) say εὐλόγησεν, S. John (vi. 11) εὐχαρίστησας, and S. Matthew here, and S. Mark εὐλόγησεν; but S. Matthew (xv. 36) and S. Mark (viii. 6), relating the other miracle of the seven loaves, say εὐχαρίστησας. Again, S. Matthew (xxvi. 26), S. Mark (xiv. 22), speaking of the Sacrament of Christ's Body, say εὐλόγησας. S. Luke (xxii. 19), S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xi. 24), εὐχαριστησας. From all these passages it is clear that εὐλογεῖν and εὐχαριστεῖν were the same. But they must prove that εὐλογεῖν, *benedicere*, is used for εὐχαριστεῖν, *gratias agere*, and not rather the contrary, εὐχαριστεῖν for εὐλογεῖν, which they have neither tried to prove, nor could have proved if they had. We can easily prove on the contrary that εὐχαριστεῖν is put for εὐλογεῖν.

1. Because the giving of thanks here is nothing, the benediction everything; for Christ wished to multiply the loaves; He had not multiplied them yet. He did not, therefore, give thanks to the Father because He had

multiplied it, but He blessed the bread that He might multiply it.

2. If He had given thanks, He would have given them to the Father, not to the bread; and He is said to have blessed the bread (*S. Luke* ix. 16); εὐλογεῖν, therefore, is not taken for εὐχαριστεῖν, but, on the contrary, εὐχαριστεῖν for εὐλογεῖν.

They say that εὐλόγησεν αὐτους means, "He gave thanks for" (*super illos*): a conclusion which they can by no means prove, but which can be refuted by the simple laws of grammar. For if the Evangelist had meant this, he would not have said, αὐτους, but ἐν or ἐπὶ αὐτους (*in* or *super*); but S. Luke says, εὐλόγησεν αὐτους, and S. Paul (1 *Cor.* x. 16), "for we blesseth cup itself". So, again, 1 *Tim.* iv. 4, 5; so that something is added to the food by its being blessed.

The blessing, then, is directed both to God, as the Author from whom it is sought, and to the bread, as matter subjected to the blessing, which would not be the case if the benediction were taken for the giving of thanks. Besides, why do we read that Christ did not bless bread except when He wished to change it into something better or to multiply it, when He took it daily, unless He impressed some virtue upon it, that through that blessing it might increase and multiply, as when He blessed our first parents He said (*Gen.* i. 28), "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth"?

When Christ, therefore, looked up to heaven and blessed the loaves, He prayed the Father to pour out His blessing on them, that by it they might be multiplied; and when it is said, by S. John, εὐχαρίστησεν, the meaning is not that He gave thanks, but that He called down the grace of the Father upon the loaves. The proof is that the ancient Greek writers used the word transitively; for they call bread of the Eucharist ἄρτον εὐχαριστήθεντα (as S. Justin, *Apol.*, ii.; and S. Irenæus, iv. 34).

And He gave to His disciples.

That the miracle might be done by them, in a manner, as His ministers, to show, as S. Jerome and Bede say, either that the people of Christ are to be fed *per* the Apostles; or that they might be sure witnesses of the miracle which they had, as it were, touched with their own hands, as Leontius and Euthymius say; or that, according to Theophylact, they might fix more deeply in their memories that which they had handled themselves with their own hands. Christ seems to have wished to transfer in some way the glory of the miracles from Himself to the Apostles.

S. Hilary doubts whether the loaves were multiplied in the hands of Christ, or of the Apostles, or in the hands and mouths of those who received them. It seems certain that it was not in the hands or mouths of the recipients, as the modern heretics say, who maintain that the Eucharist is not the body of Christ except in the mouths of the communicants. If so, the men, when satisfied, might have ascribed the miracle to themselves.

S. Jerome thinks that they were multiplied in the hands of Christ; S. Chrysostom, Leontius, and Euthymius, in those of the Apostles.

Either opinion is probable; but the more probable one of the two, perhaps, is that the multiplication took place first in the hands of Christ, who was the original Author of the miracle. Then we may believe that the loaves were multiplied in the breaking, and filled the twelve baskets which the twelve Apostles carried each to his own rank, as in the case of the widow of Sarepta (3 *Kings* xvii. 14, 15, 16), and the other woman of the wives of the prophets (4 *Kings* iv. 5, 6), when in drawing off the oil it multiplied. Thus, either in the hands of the Apostles or in the baskets, it increased, so that so much as they drew from the baskets to give the people so much was divinely multiplied: as in the oil cruise

of the widow, as much as she drew out so much flowed back again, so that the cruise, as Scripture says, was not diminished; that is, as much as they received from Christ, so much they collected.

Verse 20. *And they did all eat.*

There are three points to be noted here: (1) All eat; (2) they were filled. Leontius, S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact think that the Evangelist said this to show that the truth of the miracle was proved by those who ate, when, having previously been hungry, not in thought only but actually, they were filled. (3) Twelve baskets remained. S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Euthymius think that this was because there were twelve Apostles, that even Judas, as S. Chrysostom says, might bear his basket. The reason probably was that alleged in the former verse: that because the Apostles first received from Christ twelve full baskets, they ought, as good stewards of the blessings of God, to give back as much as they received. S. Chrysostom thinks that Christ willed the baskets to be filled with fragments and not whole loaves, for the same reason. For if they had been whole loaves, the miracle might have appeared an imaginary one; but when there were only fragments remaining, it was clear that the multitude had really eaten of the loaves.

S. Chrysostom asks why nothing remained of the fishes when we read that after the Resurrection Christ so multiplied the fishes that many remained over and above (*S. John* xxi. 11). He merely answers that Christ wished to show that He now multiplied the fish from subject matter; and that this was not done from any want of power, since He afterwards created so many without any subject matter at all, that numbers of them remained after the Apostles were satisfied. This would have been correct, if He had

done the former before the latter. It may be said more simply: 1. It does not appear whether or not anything remained of the fishes. It may be that, although the Evangelist does not mention it, much of them did remain, but that Christ did not order their fragments to be collected: the fragments of the loaves being enough to prove the truth of the miracle.

2. If nothing remained of the fishes, it may have been, perhaps, because it was enough to prove the miracle that either the loaves or the fishes should be left over. Christ willed the loaves rather than the fish to remain, because bread is the most common of all food, and from that it most clearly appeared what Christ could do in that way. This has a moral force. God pleases to give us bread—that is, the chief necessary of life—in abundance, but not so fish—that is, superfluities.

Verse 21. *Five thousand men.*

The Greek has ὡσει, "about," as also in *S. Mark* vi. 44, *S. John* vi. 10. Our version does not read it so here or in *S. Mark*, but it does in *S. John*. As to the amount, it is of no consequence. For the Sacred Writers give an exact number, though they were more or less. There are two circumstances here related by the Evangelist to show the greatness of the miracle: (1) That there were five thousand men; and (2) that he did not enumerate the women and children. Of these there would not be so great a number, because they had come a long journey; but we may still think that there was a considerable number, because women are mostly more curious than men. Leontius, S. Cyril, and Ammonius, cited in the Greek Catena on S. John, observe that the Evangelists record only men, not women, to preserve the Jewish custom, which only numbered men, as Moses did. Morally, the meaning might be that nothing is accounted of by God but what is manly and perfect.

Verse 22. *And forthwith Jesus obliged.*

On the contrary, S. John (vi. 16) seems to say that the disciples, not by the command of Christ, who had withdrawn Himself from them, but of their own minds, when they had waited for Him in the same place till evening, and seen that He had not come, went into the boat to sail to Capernaum, and seek Him there. Either may have been done. Christ, before He withdrew, may have Himself charged them to sail to Capernaum, and they may have waited till midnight, expecting Him to return. Or, on the other hand, He may first have made them embark in the ship, and then have gone before as if to dismiss the multitude; and when they were gone have returned to the mountain to pray. S. John may have related the latter and passed over the former.

Two reasons may be gathered from the events for His having compelled them to sail on before Him. 1. From S. Matthew, in the following verse, that He wished to pray alone, and, therefore, when He had sent His disciples on before, and dismissed the multitude, He went up into the mountain alone. 2. The other is from S. John (vi. 15), who says that He knew that the multitude would come and make Him a king by force. For He wished to be speedy, and go away from the whole multitude and the Apostles, that when the danger threatened, in a moment, as it may be believed that He afterwards did, He might pass through the air, and come to His disciples. It thus appears to have given occasion for the miracle that followed; for unless He had sent the Apostles on before they would not have laboured in rowing, and He would neither have walked upon the sea, nor have commanded Peter to do the same; both which miracles He did at the same time.

S. Chrysostom and Theophylact give another reason: they wished to carry with them the fragments of the loaves which remained, and by themselves alone consider the late

miracle. The Evangelist says that He obliged them to go up into the boat; and this is probable, for, as S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, and Theophylact say, they would be reluctant to leave Him. And it seems repugnant, not only to the love of Christ, but also to common human nature, for disciples to leave their master among unknown men, and on the other side of a sea; but they obeyed Him because they knew that there was nothing that Christ could not do.

And to go before Him over the water.

Into the country of the Gerasenes, which was on the other side of the lake (verse 34). They did not, therefore, now sail only on some part of, or promontory of, the lake, but they crossed it almost entirely. For Christ wished to fly from Galilee and come into the opposite country of the Gerasenes: (1) that He might escape the snares of Herod, and (2) that He might escape from those who wished to make Him a king. This may appear opposed to *S. John* vi. 17, that the disciples came beyond the sea to Capernaum. From the former chapter, viii. 28, and ix. 1, we conclude this, if the passages are compared.

It seems from S. John that both the disciples and Christ came to Capernaum, and that there was held the notable discourse about the Body and Blood, which is related in *S. John* vi. It appears that the miracle of the walking on the water was done when the disciples had come from the spot where Christ had multiplied the loaves, and were sailing by night to Capernaum. Then they sailed from Capernaum to the country of the Gerasenes, on the other side of the lake. S. John then, because he wished to record the conversation about the Flesh and Blood, omitted the visit to the Gerasenes. But S. Matthew and S. Mark, when they only wished to describe the miracle on the sea, and how Christ passed again into the country of the Gerasenes, pass over what took place in Capernaum, and so relate the

history as to appear to signify that the miracle of the sea happened when they were sailing to the country of the Gerasenes. The voyage was the same, except that they stayed a short time in Capernaum while the conversation on the Flesh and Blood took place.

Verse 23. *He went into a mountain alone to pray.*

He went up into a mountain twice, as appears from *S. John* vi. 3. First, when He came into the desert place; secondly, when He had done the miracle, and dismissed the Apostles (verse 15). The first time He fled from them that He might be concealed: the second time to pray.

Verse 25. *And in the fourth watch of the night.*

The last, which is also called the morning watch (*Exodus* xiv. 24; 1 *Kings* xi. 11). The night was divided into four watches, as is often described in Scripture (*Judges* vii. 19; *Lam.* ii. 19; *S. Luke* ii. 8; xii. 38). Christ, therefore, awaited a threefold opportunity for working this miracle. 1. That the disciples might be in the middle of the sea, where they could look for no human aid. 2. That the wind might be contrary, and the ship tossed about by huge waves. 3. That the last watch of the night might arrive to try the faith and patience of the disciples, and that they might see the need of the miracle; for Christ did not work miracles without some known and acknowledged necessity. These circumstances have been observed by Leontius, and are, as he says, a very useful proof to us, not to wonder if, when opposed by adverse circumstances, divine help does not seem to be at hand at once. God wills first to try our patience, and, like a spectator, to observe our conflict in the last watch, that is, when we are brought into the last and greatest danger. S. Cyril Alexandria, on *S. John* vi. 17, says the same.

Walking upon the sea.

Leontius says on this passage: "The sea was subject to Him as its God, and He walked upon the waters". This was the miracle, and in this sense is it understood by the Ancients (S. Justin, *Quæst.* 117; S. Augustin, *Serm. de Temp.* clix.; S. Ambrose, *De Interpret. Job*, i. 5).

It is an apparition.

That is, something that appears in a bodily form, but is not a body, whether it be angel or devil, or some other kind of spirit. It was a common opinion that spirits of this kind can at times be seen, as we find in *S. Luke* xxiv. 37 and *Acts* xii. 15, and because they are believed either to have done, or to be able to do, harm, the Apostles feared.

Verse 28. *If it be Thou.*

Many heretics blame Peter as if in saying, "If it be Thou," he had shown want of faith; and because he sought to come to Christ alone and without the others, they accuse him of senseless heat and arrogance. The words of S. Hilary may be cited in contrast.

This, he says, should be considered in S. Peter, that he surpassed the others in faith. He ascribes to S. Peter singular and excellent faith; they accuse him of unbelieving folly and arrogance. S. Jerome, again, says: "In all places the most ardent faith is seen in Peter"; and when he had proved this by many examples, he added: "By the same ardour of faith which he always showed, he now, when the rest were silent, believed that he could do that by his Master's will which that Master Himself could do by nature. It is enough for us that we can oppose SS. Hilary and Jerome to the followers of Calvin; but let us hear our Master, Christ Himself. He assuredly did not blame the desire and request of Peter, but by granting them rather proved that He would not have done so if they had been

preferred arrogantly and without faith; for He required faith from all to whom He was going to work a miracle. Nor would He have withheld blame if He had thought that Peter deserved such. For He blamed him soon after for his fearfulness. When, then, S. Peter said, "If it be Thou," he did not doubt as to faith (*de fide*), but as to fact (*de facto*). For he believed that Christ could enable him to walk upon the water (which the followers of Calvin do not believe), but he doubted whether it were Christ who spoke, or some spirit who pretended to be Christ; because he knew that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and he wished to prove the spirits whether they were of God. For if, as Theophylact says, he had doubts *de fide*, he would not have said, "Bid me come to Thee upon the waters," wishing to prove his words by his actions. For he knew that an angel, bad or good, could take a human form, and walk upon the waters, and imitate the voice of Christ, but that it could not give others the power of doing so.

Verse 29. *Come.*

Christ gave Peter permission, to show that He was Himself (which Peter wished to discover). S. Jerome, on this passage, refutes the Marcionists and the Manichæans, who said on this that Christ had not a true body, but one only in appearance. "There are some," as Tertullian says (*Lib. de Bapt.*), "who maintain that the Apostles never had any other baptism than the aspersion of the waves in the tempest." He replies: "It is one thing to be sprinkled or opposed by the violence of the sea, another to be sprinkled by the discipline of religion".

Verse 30. *But seeing the wind grew strong, he was afterwards afraid.*

It is, says S. Chrysostom, in excuse of Peter, "the condition of human nature, when great difficulties have been

overcome, sometimes to yield to lesser ones. This was the case of Elias under Jezebel, and of Moses in Egypt." Theophylact excuses him still further. He did not doubt at all when he cried, "Lord, save me".

Verse 31. *O thou of little faith.*

The faith of Peter was great and singular, for he thought that with the help of Christ he could do what Christ Himself did, and he cast himself into the waters to walk upon them, but was seized with present human fear. "If," says S. Jerome, "it was said to the Apostle Peter, of whose faith and ardour we have spoken above, when he confidently said: 'Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the waters,' but then felt some little fear: 'O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?' what is to be said to us who of this little faith have not even the smallest particle?" We may doubt why Christ suffered him either to sink or to fear. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact reply, lest from so great a miracle he might grow proud. S. Jerome, however, says: "The faith of his soul was warm, but human weakness drew him down into the sea. He was left a little while to temptation, that his faith might be increased, and that he might understand that it was not by readiness of entreaty, but by the power of God, that he was preserved."

Verse 32. *And when they were come up into the boat.*

S. John (vi. 22) seems to signify that Christ did not go up into the ship. S. Chrysostom and Theophylact reply that the Apostles wished to receive Christ into the ship, but that He would not, but walked upon the waters for some distance with S. Peter, to confirm his faith; but when they were near the shore He went up into the ship. S. John does not seem to mean that Christ did not go up into the ship, but that there was no need that He should do so, because in a moment the ship was at the shore. Five

miracles were wrought at this time: Christ was carried through the air when He followed the Apostles; He walked upon the water that Peter might walk; He caused the wind; He stilled the tempest; He brought the ship to land the moment He entered it.

Verse 33. *And they that were in the boat.*

S. Chrysostom and others understand the Apostles by "they". Some think that, as is probable, they were the sailors and crew. This seems the more probable because the words, "They came and adored Him," apply but slightly to the disciples, who believed already that He was the Son of God. The words of S. John, therefore (vi. 22), that Christ had not entered into the ship with them, but that the disciples had departed alone, are not to be understood that only the disciples departed, so that there was no one in the ship with them, but that they departed without Christ.

They came.

After they had come to land (*S. Mark* vi. 54).

Indeed Thou art the Son of God.

They confessed this, not as if Christ were the Son of God by adoption, but by nature: not as a righteous man, but as very God. In the same way as the Pharisees denied Him to be such, taking the Son of God and God for the same thing (*S. John* x. 33); when He had called Himself not God but the Son of God (*S. John* xix. 7 and *S. Matt.* xxvii. 40). All these passages are to be understood, not of adoption, of which there was no doubt, but of nature; for that Christ was the Son of God—that is, a righteous man—no one doubts; nor if a man said that he was the son of God in that sense, could he be punished by the Law. Thus this passage is strong against the Arians. And S. Chrysostom has observed that Christ did not reprove those who called

Him the Son of God, but rather confirmed the opinion by many miracles performed in their sight.

Verse 35. *When they had knowledge of Him.*

By report, says S. Jerome, not by personal knowledge. But it is credible that many knew Him personally as well, because He had been there before, and had healed two demoniacs (viii. 28). These events, as some say, happened not on the same day as that on which Christ came there, but after the report of His arrival had spread. It is not improbable that the Evangelists may have united the actions of different days into one. It does seem wonderful that the Genesarenes should now have received Christ so eagerly, when but a short time before they had cast them out of their coasts (viii. 34). The answer is easy: "The fame of His miracles had increased: their faith had increased," says S. Chrysostom. Christ knew this. Knowing, therefore, that they were not fitted to receive the Gospel before, He departed thence. Now, knowing that they were ripe, He returned, as it were, to the harvest.

Verse 36. *And they besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment.*

The Evangelist praises their faith, declaring it to be very great. It is not meant that the men of Genesar confined the grace of Christ to the hem of His garment; but that so great was their faith that they believed that by that touch alone all manner of diseases would be healed. In this sense they preferred their request. Whether this were true and notable faith, or mere superstition, Christ shall decide: "And as many as touched were made whole," says the Evangelist. Miracles are apt to be worked for faith, not superstition. Here, as many as touched were healed; and (ix. 20) the woman with the issue touched; and was healed: "Behold a woman who had an issue of blood twelve years

came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment I shall be healed." S. Chrysostom says on the passage, that in the Eucharist we have not only the hem of Christ's garment, but His whole Body. If they who touched the hem were healed, how much more we who touch the whole Body of Christ? S. Gregory Nazianzen relates in his funeral oration for his sister Gorgonia, that she was healed of a very severe disease by touching the Eucharist.

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The Complete Works of St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux. Translated into English from the Edition of DOM. JOANNES MABILLON, of the Benedictine Congregation of St. Maur (Paris: 1690), and Edited by SAMUEL J. EALES, D.C.L., sometime Principal of St. Boniface College, Warminster; one of the Translators of Corn. à Lapide. *See next page.*

In addition to the above several others in this series will shortly be announced, including, besides original works and English reprints, translations from the French, German, Italian and Spanish; and no efforts will be spared to make the Standard Library a valuable addition to English Literature.

JOHN HODGES, 25, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

The following Prospectus was issued (it is believed) about 1844; but events which followed prevented its being carried out.

It is proposed to publish by Subscription THE ENTIRE

WORKS OF ST. BERNARD,

ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX, IN ENGLISH.

To be Translated by Members of the Church of England, and edited

BY FREDERICK OAKELEY, M.A.,

Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford;

AND JOHN S. BREWER, M.A.,

Of Queen's College, Oxford; and Classical Tutor of King's College, London.

The work will include a Life of St. Bernard, compiled from original sources, and will be completed in 6 vols. 8vo., price to subscribers 12s. each volume, to be payable on delivery. *The price to non-subscribers will be raised.*

The Life and Letters (including those "on Consideration," addressed to Pope Eugenius III.) will be published *first*, forming two of the six volumes, and may be subscribed for with or without the remainder. Those subscribers who wish for the Life and Letters *only* are requested to signify such wish at the time of subscribing, otherwise they will be presumed to desire the whole.

It is to be distinctly understood, that the various parties who may be concerned, more or less directly, in this undertaking, pledge themselves by the act no further than to the opinion that it is, on the whole, desirable to promote acquaintance with the writings of this great Saint, and that in an unmutilated form. Any omission would seem to involve an expression of opinion, both upon the part excluded and the part retained; whereas, the Editors' wish is to keep clear of the exercise of private judgment altogether, and simply to exhibit the Work *as a fact* in ecclesiastical literature. Under this idea, they propose to render the translation as faithful and complete as possible; and to confine the Notes to explanations, or illustrations, where necessary, of the text.

It may be well to state that the genuine writings of St. Bernard, as contained in the best editions of his Works, consist of

1. An Exposition of the Book of Canticles, in 86 Sermons.
2. An Exposition of the 91st Psalm, in 17 Sermons.
3. A Treatise on the Love of God.
4. A Treatise on Grace and Free Will.
5. A Treatise on Baptism.
6. Five Books on Consideration; addressed to Pope Eugenius III.
7. A Confutation of the errors of Abelard.
8. The Life of St. Malachi.
9. A Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Chant.
10. Several Minor Treatises.
11. 125 Sermons on Various Subjects.
12. Homilies on different Festivals of the Church.
13. Letters to private friends, and the Chief Ecclesiastical and Political Persons of his day, as well Englishmen as others.

It is strange that the works of this great Father have never been rendered accessible in English as a whole. An English version of "The Golden Pystle" was indeed printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1530, and by Robert Wyre in the following year; and sundry other brief Treatises in 1631.

It is now proposed (God willing) to carry out the publication as originally proposed.

The Works will be translated from the Standard Edition of St. Bernard — that edited by Dom John Mabillon, Presbyter and Monk of the Benedictine Congregation of St. Maur (Paris, 1690), using Gaume's careful reprint (Paris, 1839), "editio quarta, emendata et aucta."

The plan detailed above will be followed, so far as that the first two volumes will contain the "Life" and Letters of St. Bernard; and it is hoped to issue two volumes annually, until the work shall be complete.

The Vols. will be issued in the Catholic Standard Library, but may be subscribed for separately if desired.

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